

Christ Authority

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[0 : 00] Why would you entrust your life to Jesus? Why would you do that? That's really one of the questions that we've been looking at in many ways.

That's one of the questions why we've been looking at the person and the work of Jesus. It's very important for us.

And thus far we've looked at the person of Jesus in different ways. We've seen that he is God. We've seen that he becomes one of us. We've seen that he's an example. We've seen that he's our Lord.

We've seen lots of different things about Jesus. And this evening we're going to look at the authority of Jesus. And I think that's a very important question for Christians to consider.

The authority of Jesus over us in our lives. It's quite easy to talk about the authority of Jesus kind of theoretically.

[0 : 58] It's easy to talk about it theologically. But in reality what matters is whether he has authority.

We say, you know, Corey was talking last night about, last week about theology. And that we're all theologians. The moment we say Jesus is Lord, we're theologians. Well, when we say Jesus is Lord, we're saying Jesus has authority over my life.

Because he is worthy of that. And again, I think we can believe that in our heads and we can believe that theologically. But I think the rubber hits the road generally for us when the authority of God is questioned in our lives because it goes against our authority.

See, if things are going well for us and if God agrees with us, no problem. We can have, you know, we can talk about God having, and the Lord Jesus having authority over lives when actually he's just really acquiescing with what we want.

When it's our will, yeah, yeah, God's authority. He agrees with me. But I think the real challenge for us with respect to the lordship of Jesus, the authority of Jesus, is when he says something and we want to go and do something else.

[2 : 23] When our authority and our lordship says, no, I'm going this way. And let's not think that it's on necessarily big, important, rebellious, sinful issues that that might be.

It might be on our interpretation of the Bible because that was the problem with the Jews, wasn't it here in this passage? So when the grace and the lordship and the authority of Jesus Christ says one thing and we're saying, no way, Jesus, I want to do this.

This is what I want. And that's, I think, when practically, because what you often find from this pulpit is that you'll get the practical implications of truth.

I hope so anyway, as well as the reality of the truth as it's given to us. So for a few minutes, we want to look at that this evening. The authority, why he has so much authority and why that authority is really important for us in our lives.

The initial crime here for Jesus, because this is a kind of, it's almost like a courtroom scene. There's a crime has been committed and Jesus defends himself.

[3 : 35] And then Jesus goes on the prosecution. Jesus goes out and attacks those who seek to expose him and who he is.

So the initial crime that Jesus commits is that he's broken two very important Jewish laws that they regard as being God's laws. He's broken the manmade Sabbath laws of the Jews by healing someone on the Sabbath day.

A heinous crime. But he also, in calling God his father and saying what he says about himself with God the Father, is claiming equality with God.

And that's how much more serious in, because that's the sin of blasphemy. He is claiming to be God by calling Jesus Father and by saying that they do the same work together. That might not immediately seem obvious to us when he calls him Father that that would make a meek old God, because we were told to call Jesus God Father. But for the Jews that was something that just didn't happen.

[4 : 44] They didn't really have that relationship or that terminological relationship with God and didn't call him Father. And the implications of what Jesus was saying was that he was claiming equality with God.

Which is why we're told in this passage that they wanted to kill him. They wanted to get rid of him. This religious God-fearing people wanted to kill Jesus because he was claiming to be the son of God.

So that's the initial crime. They wanted rid of him. They wanted him out of their lives. It's a bit like, it's a different clientele because they were religious people.

But it's a bit like the prodigal son who in that story, he also went into a far country because he wanted rid of the Father. Basically when he was taking his interdicts, you know that, he basically was saying, I want you dead.

I want your money and the only way I get your money is either you give it to me or you die. So he wanted the Father dead. And then in a different way, in a different grouping of people, they were also wanting Jesus dead.

[5 : 46] They were wanting God, they weren't wanting the authority or the claims of Jesus in their lives. And I think sometimes it might seem a bit melodramatic to talk in these terms, but I think sometimes in our lives we do the same thing.

We want Jesus dead in the sense that we don't want, we want to go in a far country. We want to do our own thing. We don't really want Jesus, we just are uncomfortable and uneasy with the authority of Jesus in our lives.

We find the whole concept of God's authority in our lives through Jesus Christ just troubling because it's humbling and because it means that we need to act differently from what we naturally act and how we naturally act.

So we may be in maybe less dramatic terms, we also want rid of God in our lives, particularly when God's saying something and we want to do something else.

What do we do? We quite often close the Bible. We quite often stop praying and we quite often just go ahead and make our own decision because we undermine the authority of Jesus in our lives as Christians and the significance and the importance that he has.

[6 : 56] So Jesus gives his own defence in this passage that we read in John 5 and he speaks about why he has authority.

And he says he has authority in verse 19 because he is the life-giver. Verse 21, he says, Just as the Father raised from the dead and gives them life even so, the Son gives life.

It's just a remarkable claim that Jesus makes in this passage. This is an amazing section of intertwining between the Father, God, the Father and Jesus Christ.

It's an interesting passage where the divinity of Jesus and the Fatherhood of God and it's not quite the trinity that's been spoken of because the Spirit isn't mentioned but the complexity of the Godhead is being unfolded a little bit in this passage where the Father can't do without the Son and the Son is submissive to the Father as well and all kinds of amazing realities are going on that the Father raises from the dead and Jesus raises from the dead and Jesus gives life and the Father gives life and there's just a tremendous language of intertwining between God, the Father and God, the Son and Jesus is claiming here to be the one who gives life.

Now that is an astonishing claim of authority isn't it? Because it's a claim that affects each one of us as living beings this evening.

[8 : 29] He is saying he is equal with God as the life giver. We know that God is the life giver, he gifts life but he's the source of life. All life's sources from comes from God.

There is no life apart from God and Jesus is saying that he is equal with the Father in this role and yet it speaks also of distinctive roles and distinctive roles between the Father and the Son.

We've looked at that previously when we've looked at Christ, God the Son becoming incarnate but we could say that the Father is God sending and commanding and the Son is God sent and obedient.

Both God but with different roles particularly in salvation and redemption. But tonight it's significant and I wanted particularly for our prayer tonight to be a prayer of thanksgiving.

Very often we are quick to ask, we're quick to request, we're quick to demand and we're slow to give thanks. We're slow to give thanks for the whole of our lives and the privileges that we have every day, the breath that we breathe, the gifts that we've been given, the bodies that we have, the families that we come from, the life that we have been given and the Bible that tells us about the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

[9 : 59] A sense and an attitude of gratitude is hugely significant for us when we recognise the authority of Jesus as the one who is the giver of life.

And more than that, the one who will raise us from the dead if we trust and believe in him that he says that in these verses that we read, he's the one who gives life and who raises from the dead. That's why the resurrection is so important that we looked at this morning and where repentance and faith in Jesus Christ is also so significant and so important.

It's his authority alone. One day as a Christian, if you die and you lie in the grave one day, his voice and his authority voice will raise you from the grave and to new life of unbridled joy and blessing. That is the degree of authority that Jesus has over your life and the significance that he has. And it should, I think, mould us in our Christian lives to be gracious and humble and to serve him and to follow him.

[11 : 22] As nobody can come near to the authority that Jesus has and the power that he has and the influence and the significance he will have in your life as a Christian beyond the grave, that he, by his authoritative word, will raise you from the dead.

No one comes near to him. And yet I think often in our lives, and I speak for myself particularly, often we leave him as a suffering servant.

We leave him as the one who we call on as a slave when we need him, one who is a bit player in our lives and is the one who we look to to give us what we want rather than the one before whom we come and simply recognise who he is and his authority and his authority that ought to change us and mould the lives that we live.

So he is authoritative because he is the one who, by the word of his power, gives life and raises the dead. But he is also authoritative in this passage and he defends himself here because he speaks of himself as the judge of all people.

In verse 20, he says, and the Father has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. So again there is this talk about the Father and the Son and their positions and their authority.

[12 : 57] The Father gives the Son authority to judge all people and he has given him the honour of this position. All judgment is given to him.

Everything, all authority and all judgment is given to him and his judgment is just. The crucified Saviour has also the significant authority to be the judge of all mankind on that great day.

Again, speaks of not a weak and impotent Saviour but a great and strong and significant Saviour.

The one who we spoke about or we've looked at over Easter as the one who has died for our sins, was buried and was raised on the third day.

That crucified and risen Saviour on that day stands on the throne, sits on the throne, and judges him unto. And what you want to hear on that day as you face him will be, he's mine.

She's mine. She's one who followed me. He's one who followed me. They are ones for whom I died and I've chosen.

[14 : 15] And that is the word that we want to hear from the authoritative judge of all mankind on that day as we consider our lives. We want to be people who have accepted him as Lord before we will face him as judge.

And as Christians, we will all give account to this Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The judge of all mankind who could not deflect justice on his own son.

On his own perfect son, he could not deflect justice because he was reckoning his own son as guilty as a substitute. And our place will be the one who will judge your neighbour, your friend and your colleague, and before whom they will stand.

And I think that would make us, it ought to make us think of them and look at them differently. As all being people who come under the authority of Jesus.

And sometimes we've got a, maybe not explicitly, but implicitly, we kind of have our Christianity and our Christian living in a kind of bubble.

[15 : 31] It's in a kind of bubble. And we live our lives in a Christian bubble. And we don't really think that people who don't believe are affected by it or that it matters to them.

That really we're kind of going along in this Christian bubble and we'll go along like that until we die. And everyone else is just kind of living their lives as they are any old way. And we forget that everyone comes under the authority of Jesus.

That he is a great sovereign Lord and that he will judge everyone. It's all the people we come into, the people that we judge and think, nah, they'll not believe. They've got no interest. The Gospel will never touch their lives.

But they are people who will come under the authority of Jesus also and before whom they will stand. And I do think it helps us to look at people differently when we think of them in that light. And recognize that we are all... One of the great phrases that is completely, I think I've used this before, is a great street philosopher's statement of life that doesn't come from the Bible.

[16 : 39] But it's true nonetheless, is that we are all Jock Tampson's Bairns. That's a really good phrase. If you're not Scottish, you might not know it.

And it just means we're kind of all in it together. We're all... It's another one to take home in the palace of that. We're all Jock Tampson's Bairns. And that's a really good one to think about and to consider.

Because that's right. So we don't point a finger and look at others and think we're better than them. We don't think it doesn't matter to them. But we realize and we know and appreciate and we understand that all come under the authority of Jesus.

And therefore your neighbors and your friends and your colleagues and your mums and your dads and your sisters and your brothers, who may be not Christians, we will look at them differently because of that.

And this morning when we had a lot of people in church, who don't normally come to church, who are not committed to the Christian faith, or not believers, and they come to church because of a baptism, then we love that and we pray for their souls and pray that they will hear and come under the beautiful grace of God, the grace of Christ and the message of salvation and the good news, and that you will play a part in that.

[17 : 57] And that you will be important in that. He's judge, well, Mankin, but he also is someone who speaks. He speaks with authority and that is something, again, that we look to recognize and understand and appreciate in our Christian lives.

A couple of times here he says, well, what is he saying? I tell you the truth. I tell you the truth. He says it in verse 24 and then he says it again in verse 25.

I tell you the truth. The older people here who used to read the, or maybe still do read the authorised version, remember it is verily, verily I say unto you, truly, truly I say to you, repeated, and use this declarative, formulaic language which is saying, I'm saying something to you, very important.

I'm saying something with authority. I tell you the truth. Whoever hears my word and believes has eternal life will not be condemned. In this beautiful phrase, you've crossed from death to life.

Isn't that a tremendous phrase? That he says, with all authority, those who believe in me have crossed from death to life. Something tangible has happened in their lives. They've moved from a place, they've been separated from God to a place with them.

[19 : 09] And then he goes on to say, I tell you the truth, verily, verily, truly, truly I say to you, time is coming and is now coming, the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, those who hear will live.

And so you've got this great declarative truth that Jesus gives, that he speaks. And when we hear and respond to his message, this authoritative message, we receive life and we receive fellowship with him.

And we will be, as we mentioned earlier, raised from the dead. We will hear his voice commanding us out of the grave. How authoritative is that? Commanding us out of the grave.

You've been in a graveyard? You can shout as loud as you want, nothing happens. We have no power over what is, you know, it's a place of the dead.

And yet he will speak his voice with the word of his creative power and it will be done. And people say, well, how can that happen? People have disintegrated, people have gone, people have been far away, people have been dead for hundreds of years, how will they come and be raised?

[20 : 15] It was the same word of creative power from the very beginning. It's no problem when we genuinely see and believe in the Creator God who spoke the world into being.

He speaks the world into being and he raises the dead. And often we take the word of God with a pinch of salt, the Bible, God's living word.

We don't read it. We don't come under its authority. We ignore bits of it that we don't like. We pick and mix the Bible. We don't work at understanding what this living God with his authority is saying to us in our lives.

We would rather trust our poor and miserable feelings rather than the declarative word of God. And often we would attribute in our lives to the Holy Spirit guidance which is often no more than simply doing what we want.

We do what we want and then we just can clothe it in spiritual language and say, well, this is what God wants me to do. Nothing of the sort.

[21 : 28] It's just simply what we want to do ourselves and we attribute it to the Holy Spirit. But we haven't looked for and sought and listened to the authority of the word of God in our lives.

Let him speak with authority, particularly let him speak and be guided and beyond his authority when he asks you clearly to do something that in your own heart you don't want to do something else.

Don't look to God's word to back up what you've already decided you're going to do. If you're looking for guidance, if you're looking for God's authority in your life and God's oversight, then don't just choose what you want to do and then somehow scabble about the Bible to find something and justify it. And if you don't find any justifies you want to scottable anyway.

But be open and be humble and be ready for God to say, no, look, that's not what I want from you.

This is what my word says. This is what I want from you.

Don't walk in any other path. And we will find then his authority, his blessing and guidance. And just very briefly as we close, he also not only in this prosecution does he, or in this defence does he defend himself with these truths, he also supplies witnesses, you know that's very important, isn't it?

[23 : 00] And he speaks a lot in this passage about the different people that testify to his authority. And very briefly he talks about God, you know, being the one who is authoritative over his life in verse 32.

If I testify to myself, testimony is not valid. There's another who testifies in my favour. And he goes on to speak about God later on as being the one in verse 37 who testifies.

The father who has sent me has himself testified concerning me. And then he talks about John the Baptist, just another human being, I know, but he uses John the Baptist because the Jews respected him. The Jews thought he was a prophet.

So they thought Jesus thinks it's worth using John the Baptist, you know. You know, I mentioned that because John was a lamp that burned and gave light and you chose for a time to enjoy his light. John testified about Jesus. And then the works of Jesus themselves are testimony.

I'm not going to testify later than that of John for the very work that the Father has given me to finish in which I'm doing, testifies that the Father has sent me. So the work of Jesus testifies to authority. The fact that that's kind of his signs or his miracles.

[24 : 14] You know, he turned water into wine. The five loaves and the two fishes feeding so many people. The humming of the waves and the sea, the raising of the dead, his own death, his own resurrection.

These signs, these wonders, these testify to his authority, the testify to who he is. As do verse 39, the scriptures that testify to him, the Old Testament.

We've looked at that quite a lot in finding out about Jesus that the Old Testament testifies about Jesus, points to, points forward to Jesus.

And the interesting thing is that the Jewish religious leaders, they knew, Jesus said, you know, you diligently study the scriptures. It wasn't that they were ignorant of the Bible.

They diligently studied the scriptures, but you were blind. You refused to come to me to have life.

You know, the challenging thing is it's easy to be near to Jesus. It's easy to have an open Bible at one level, but not hear the voice of Jesus and be blind and be as lost as anyone who is far from God.

[25 : 33] Because we need to see Jesus and hear Jesus and be under the authority of Jesus when we are in the scriptures. So the question is, are we content as Christians to live under his Lordship?

To say more than Jesus is Lord, but to live it. And to live it when his path says, this way, and our path says, but I want to go this way.

Are we willing for Jesus to be Lord when that's the case in the crossroads of our lives? I will. God's will. Maybe it's in business, maybe it's in your marriage, maybe it's in your studies, maybe it's in the use of money, maybe it's in your thought life, maybe it's in your imagination.

Are we willing to say, God's will? No, I'm going my own way. Because that's when his Lordship matters. We want to be angry. Do we want to be bitter? Do we want to be jealous? Do we want to be lustful?

Are we willing to just hold on to these things? Because that's what we want. Or are we willing to have his authority speak to us? So he finishes with this challenge, doesn't he, to the Jews, the Jewish religious leaders of his days, of his day, and he says, you know, where are your hearts? [26:56] You know, I do not accept praise from him, but I know you, I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. So where are our hearts tonight? There's a love of God in them. Not talking about knowledge.

Not doing nothing about the love. I'm talking about where is the love of God in our hearts tonight. And he goes on and says, where are our priorities, you know?

Verse 43 and 44, you know, he says that they'll listen to other people and they want praise from others, but they don't want praise from God.

You know, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God. Where are our priorities? Who do we want praise from in our lives? Under whose authority are we with respect to being people pleasers or God pleasers?

Because we regard his authority or otherwise. Where are our hearts tonight? Where are our priorities and where also is our hope?

[28:01] You know, that last section, verse 45 to 47, you know, I'll not accuse you before the Father. You're accused of it as Moses on whom your hopes are set. But if you believed Moses, you would believe me.

So their hope was set on Moses, you know, these religious leaders, but they didn't really even know Moses. Because Moses gave up the pleasures of Egypt because he believed in Christ, the Christ who was to come and his life points to this Messiah, to the Savior.

So their hope was misplaced and was misguided and was wrong. And the question is again, they were so near and they had so many privileges.

And as your hope tonight in being here, in your religion, in your legalistic works, in the law, in your orthodoxy, in your cold orthodoxy, my cold orthodoxy, what is our hope in?

Our hope is always to be in Jesus Christ because he is God and he has great authority. I think we all are people who need to watch and to be graceful and to be under Christ's authority in our lives.

[29:21] Let's pray briefly. Father, we pray that you would help us to live our lives under your authority. So often we know that when the rubber hits the road, it's our will that we want to do.

And we often battle with yours and we make excuses for which we ask for forgiveness. We say that you're harsh and oppressive and it's difficult and nobody will know.

And it's only a little thing we're doing differently or wrong or separate from you. But give us the wisdom and the grace and the humility in our hearts, particularly in our hearts, to come under your Lordship, to say in the most remarkable way, as Jesus said in the Garden, not my will but yours be done.

And help us to do that. And help us to be lovers of God and lovers of one another, to love our neighbour as ourselves, which often is the great authoritative outworking of grace, which exposes our selfishness and our self-centredness.

So forgive us when we fail to see these things. And forgive us, Lord God, when we don't come under your authority, when we willfully sin or we willfully go against you.

[30:56] May we just see how much you love us and how much you care and how much your great laws are there for our good. And therefore, may we pleurably come under your authority. Help us in these things we pray for Jesus' sake. Amen.