

The Authority Of Jesus

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[0 : 00] Turn with me to Luke chapter 5 and verses 17 to 26. This is a passage about the authority of Jesus.

The authority of Jesus. Authority is defined in the dictionary as the moral or legal right or ability to control.

Now, none of us really like the word authority because we associate it with repression and the denial of self-expression.

But when it comes to Jesus and the authority of Jesus, we're in a different world. Because his authority is liberating, not repressive.

His authority restores our humanity and allows us to be who we really want to be. And if you doubt me, ask this man whom Jesus miraculously healed from his paralysis.

[1 : 08] Do you think he resented or welcomed Jesus' authority? From this passage in Luke chapter 5, I want us to see two things.

First, the authority of Jesus in action. And secondly, the authority of Jesus in application. This study is important to us as Christians because we believe that we can only be truly human and who we want to be by living under the loving, gracious, and powerful authority of Jesus Christ spoken about in this passage.

First of all then, the authority of Jesus in action. In Luke chapter 4 and verse 36, Jesus is described in this way.

For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits and they come out. Jesus in that passage in Luke 4, having been confronted by a man containing an evil spirit, displays his authority and power over evil by performing a miraculous exorcism.

And now here in Luke chapter 5, Jesus displays his power with an even greater miracle and shows how he has power not just over sin, but also the misery of sin.

[2 : 43] And I'll explain these two ideas as we go along. First, he has authority over sin. He has authority over sin.

Having met this paralyzed man who had been lowered down right in front of him, Jesus does the most unexpected of things. He says, Man, your sins are forgiven you.

What stood between this paralyzed man and God has now been removed. It's gone. That which from the beginning has destroyed our pure relationship with God and has ruined the human race has, by a word of Jesus' power, now been taken away.

Man, your sins are forgiven you. Now, the taking away or forgiveness of sins has occupied humanity for thousands of years.

From the very beginnings of human civilization, religion has been a dominant feature. And what is religion? But the desire of a sinful humanity to get rid of its sins before God.

[3 : 59] Tens and hundreds of millions of human beings, even today, pursue a religious life to try and get rid of their sin.

They perform all kinds of ceremonies. They subject themselves to all kinds of miseries because in their heart of hearts, they know that their relationship with God is broken.

Judaism, the religion of the Old Testament, was no different. The Old Testament is the story of a religion designed to get rid of sin and find forgiveness with God.

Millions of animals were sacrificed to get rid of all the wrong things we do. There were thousands of priests, thousands of religious leaders.

But now here in Luke chapter 5 and verse 20, the universal story of the human race, even unto this day, is rendered obsolete by the simple words of Jesus.

[5 : 05] Jesus, man, your sins are forgiven you. What the sacrifice of millions of bulls and goats could not achieve, Jesus does with just a few words.

What the religious ceremonies and devotions of tens and hundreds of millions of religious people throughout our world today cannot achieve, Jesus does with his words of power and authority. Man, your sins are forgiven you. Man, this is the authority of Jesus in action. Have you come here today conscious of your need to have your sin forgiven and your relationship with God restored? Perhaps you think that by living a morally upright life, giving generously to charity, coming to church, somehow earn God's forgiveness.

Not so, for as Luke 5 20 teaches us, what's important is not what we do for God, but what God says to us through his Son.

[6 : 20] What we need to hear are the words of Jesus saying over us, man, woman, your sins are forgiven you.

And we'll see how that can be in a moment. Authority over sin. The second way in which we see Jesus' authority in action is authority over the misery of sin.

The misery of sin. The Christian faith, for all that we try to deny it, is deeply historic in British life. In the mid-17th century, a great assembly of ministers met in Westminster in London to gather together the central truths of the Christian faith.

We in the Free Church of Scotland follow in their footsteps and believe what they believed also. One of the things that this assembly of ministers in Westminster helpfully talked about was the misery of sin.

[7 : 30] The misery of sin. Now, when we hear the word misery, we might think of despair. But that's not what they meant by the word misery.

What they wanted to say was that sin has consequences. Doing bad things result in bad things happening, not necessarily to you, but to the whole human race.

When sin was introduced to the human experience at its beginning, it had consequences. It unleashed a Pandora's box of miseries, death, sickness, all kinds of human pain in this life and in the next.

So, sin and the misery of sin. That's the situation we human beings find ourselves in. Normally, there is little or no direct relationship between an individual's sin and the consequences that individual faces in this life normally.

That's the concept of karma. It's not part of the Bible's teaching. So, this man was paralyzed. Not because he was any more a sinner than anyone else.

[8 : 50] It was just the result of him being born into a human race, ruined and scarred by sin. One of the things which is so helpful about how these Westminster ministers talked about sin and the misery of sin, is that here in this passage in Luke 5, 17 through 26, we see the great authority of Jesus being used not just to release the man from his sin, but also from the misery of his sin.

Not just from sin, but from the painful consequences of his sin. This is the kind of authority Jesus has, you see. Not just to release us from sin, but also from the miseries of sin.

It's the total authority of Jesus. Jesus, the complete Savior, who doesn't just release us from sin, but from its consequences also.

What then does Jesus use his total authority for in this passage? Is it for dark and controlling purposes, like this world's leaders?

Or is it to restore this paralyzed man's humanity and to set him free both from sin and the misery of sin?

[10 : 18] When people talk about Christianity being repressive and dehumanizing, it's not real Christianity or the Christianity of the Bible they're referring to.

Because Jesus makes us whole, even as God designed us to be. Jesus restores our humanity. Jesus forgives our sin.

The central theme of this passage is the authority of Jesus. His authority over sin and the misery of sin. Now, this word authority may be a taboo word in our society, but to us as Christians, it makes all the difference between spiritual life and spiritual death.

Between hope and despair. But never mind me and the other Christians gathered in this room. Ask the paralyzed man whether he felt the authority of Jesus was good or bad.

I think you know the answer he'll give you. The authority of Jesus in action. Well, secondly, the authority of Jesus in application.

[11:38] In application. Because this authority of Jesus is not abstract or theoretical. It doesn't belong hidden away in an old book. It's an everyday truth affecting the lives of everyday Christians. What we believe affects how we live. And the authority of Jesus changes everything about us. That is if we believe it. From Luke chapter 5 verses 17 to 26.

I want to suggest five applications of this truth about Jesus having authority over sin and the consequences of sin. The first is this.

The authority of Jesus responds to need. The authority of Jesus responds to need. In the house in which Jesus had gathered this crowd.

There were many people. But only one attracted his attention. Only one was the beneficiary of his sovereign grace. The paralyzed man.

[12:47] The man with the greatest need. Just like iron filings are attracted to a magnet. So the authority of Jesus is attracted to human need. You know that saying that we often say.

God helps those who help themselves. When it comes to the biblical presentation of Jesus. It's not true. Jesus helps those who cannot help themselves.

Jesus helps those who cannot help themselves. The great authority of Jesus over sin and the misery of sin. Responds to those who are in great need.

In our world authority is attracted to power and charisma. And often those in greatest need are ignored and swept under the carpet. But in the kingdom of God it works in entirely the opposite direction.

Authority is attracted to weakness. And those who think highly of themselves are entirely ignored. One of Luke's passions in writing both this gospel and the book of Acts.

[13:55] Is to show how Jesus' power and authority responds to those in need. Physical need. Social need. Emotional need. Spiritual need. Every other kind of need. Next week we'll see how Jesus responded to Levi.

The tax collector. Or in three weeks time. Who by any measure was an outcast from Jewish society. Jesus responds to lepers. The demon possessed.

The blind. The deaf. The mentally disturbed. Those who have lost their hope in life and so on. Luke wants us to know that whoever you are.

Whatever you've come from. If you are in great need today. You can come to Jesus. And he will respond.

Respond. What need are you in today? What's keeping you from coming to Jesus for healing and help? But then what else do you expect from a God?

[14:56] Who is described in the Scottish Psalter version of Psalm 138. Precious words. Though God be high. Yet he respects all those that lowly be.

But as the proud and lofty ones are far off. Knoweth he. Second application. The authority of Jesus works through faith.

Works through faith. The language of faith is never very far away when Jesus is working miracles. Here in Luke 5. A paralyzed man carried by his four friends.

Don't allow any kind of obstacle to stop them from getting close to Jesus. The house is crowded. And so with the ingenuity. Only the determination of faith can provide.

They cut a hole in the roof. Imagine. And lower the man right in front of Jesus. They know enough about Jesus to know that he will heal their friend.

[15:54] And so they let nothing stop them in their quest. We read that Jesus sees their faith. And when Luke talks of their faith.

He's referring to the faith of the four friends. And that of the paralyzed man. There were many in the house that day. The place was crowded. But it was the faith of these five individuals.

Which Jesus saw. And worked his miracle through. Their faith. Was based on Jesus' words. And works.

They'd heard of his many miracles. And on the basis of what they had heard. They believed that what Jesus had done for others in need. He could do for them. Their faith was not.

An airy fairy potluck chance. It was built upon the solid foundation. Of what Jesus had already said and done. They were not taking a risk. By lowering their friends.

[16:53] Into the house where Jesus was. It was as much. Of a logical reaction. Based upon reasonable evidence.

This. This is faith. In the authority. Of Jesus over sin. And the misery of sin. It's not a step into the darkness. It's not a step into the unknown.

It is a logical action. Based upon rational unreasonable evidence. Has Jesus Christ died on the cross. To take away sin.

Yes. Has he risen from the grave. And is he victorious over death. Yes. Faith and forgiveness. It is through faith in him. That Christ proclaims over us. Man. Woman. Your sins are forgiven you. To go back to an earlier point.

[17 : 55] It is not by our sacrifice. Of the bulls and goats. Of Old Testament Judaism. It is not by the ceremonies. It is not by the ceremonies. And the pilgrimages. Of today's religions. It is through faith in Jesus Christ.

And him alone. That having heard of all Jesus has done. And said. His perfect life. His painful crucifixion. His victorious resurrection.

We place our trust in him. When Jesus looks at us. Does he see faith in him? Let's allow our prayer to be.

Lord I believe. Help my unbelief. Third application. The authority of Jesus provokes opposition. It provokes opposition. Jesus in this gospel. Has already faced opposition. From Satan. In the temptations. And from his own countrymen.

[18 : 55] Who wanted to throw him. From a cliff. But now a new group of opponents. Come to the fore. They are the Pharisees. And the teachers of the law. The Pharisees.

Were just one of many religious groups. In the Israel of the day. But they were the most famous. Because of their outspoken. Judgmental. Self-righteousness. And critical spirit. The Pharisees. Had great authority. In Judea. And in Galilee. They were there. In that house that day. Because they'd also heard. Of the things Jesus. Had said. And done.

And they were afraid. Of his growing reputation. And how. If he became any more popular. With the people. He'd have more authority. Than they did. They felt.

Threatened by Jesus. Because. They feared. Feared. That they would lose. Control. And authority. Over the people. And so they opposed him. And they made every effort.

[19 : 52] To discredit him. And that. You know. In life. Is what all. Opposition to Jesus. Is based upon. It's a battle. For authority. That's ultimately.

Why they nailed Jesus. To the cross. They feared. They were losing. Control. But can you see. From this passage. How Jesus uses.

His authority. Compared to how. The Pharisees. Used their authority. They used. Their authority. To tie people up. In religious knots.

Exhaust their bones. By ruthless. Legalism. And pursue. Non-conformists. To painful death. Jesus. Uses.

His authority. To release. People. From their chains. To make them. Whole again. In him. And to restore. Their humanity.

[20 : 49] To what it was. Meant to be. Under whose authority. Would you prefer. To live today. The authority. Of social media.

Which again. And again. Ties you up. In knots. And exhausts. Your bones. By driving you. To keep up. With a standard. Of behavior. Or appearance. Or consumeristic. Desires. Or the authority.

Of Jesus. Which sets you free. From the expectations. Of others. Ultimately. The reason. We take so long.

So many of us. To become Christians. Or don't become Christians. At all. Is because. We don't want to live. Under God's authority. We want to be in control. But again. I ask the question.

[21 : 43] Under whose authority. Would you prefer. To live today? The authority. Of a self. Which is guilty. Before God. And just as weak. And frail. As the next look.

Or the authority. Of a Jesus. Who forgives. All your sin. And restores. Your humanity. Fourth application.

The authority of Jesus. Causes amazement. It causes amazement. We read that the man. Took up his bed. And went home. Glorifying God. The reaction of those.

In the house was. Amazement. Seized them all. Verse 26. And they glorified God. And were filled with awe. Saying. We have seen extraordinary things today.

When the authority of Jesus. Is displayed. There will be amazement. And there will be awe. People will realize. They have seen. Extraordinary things. And their minds and hearts.

[22 : 42] Will turn to God. You know. We live in a world. In which so little truly amazes us. And even in the church. We experience so little amazement.

We become. Used to the mundane. And the ordinary. And the safe. And we've forgotten. That when Jesus works in power. Extraordinary things can happen. Hard hearts can be opened.

In an instant. Lives can be changed. Mighty miracles. Of forgiveness. Take place. And people are released. From the miseries. And consequences. Of their sins. Perhaps we need to pray more. And expect more. Extraordinary displays. Of the authority of Jesus. Among us. The word. Extraordinary.

There in verse 26. Is that. Word from which we get. The English word. Paradox. Paradox. The paralyzed man was a sinner. Now he's been forgiven.

[23 : 42] The paralyzed man was a. Paralytic. But now. As one historic commentator. I think it was Bengel. Writes. He who was once. Carried on his bed. Now carries his bed.

These are paradoxes. Wouldn't our experience. Of Sunday worship. Be so very different. If we would. But expect. God. To perform.

Paradoxes. Here. Extraordinary. Things. And ordinary. People like us. And wouldn't it be just the greatest thing. If. If.

When they heard about what's taking place. In our church. Normal. Glaswegian. People. Would say to another. Say to one another. Come. Amazing. Things are happening there.

Let's go and find out more. About the Christ. These Christians serve and follow. Then. Not just the ones or twos. Who meet in Glasgow's churches today.

[24 : 39] But tens. And hundreds. Of thousands. Would give glory to God. And follow Jesus. And our city would really flourish. The last application.

The authority of Jesus. Prompts questions. It prompts questions. As we go through Luke's gospel. We're frequently confronted. By questions.

The chief of which is. Who? With reference to Jesus. Luke is always asking. Who? Who? He wants to cut to the chase.

And he. And through the use of the word. Through the use of the who question. Bring us to realize. Who Jesus really is. In our passage. The Pharisees ask two questions.

About Jesus. Who is this? Who speaks blasphemies? And. Who can forgive sins? But God alone. Two who questions. To go back to the dictionary again.

[25 : 41] Blasphemy is something. You say or do. That shows you do not respect God. Blasphemy is something. You say or do. That shows you do not respect God. By claiming to forgive this man's sins.

In the minds of the Pharisees. Jesus was disrespecting God. Because only God can forgive sins. Who can forgive sins but God alone?

The Pharisees rightly ask. But Luke's use of that. Who question. Opens up a new way for us. To think about Jesus. The Pharisees were right.

Since it is only against God we sin. It is only God who can forgive sin. So what does it say about Jesus. That he has the authority.

Both to forgive sin. And to release us. From the consequences of our sin. Who is he? It says about Jesus.

[26 : 40] It says about Jesus that he is more than a mere man. That he is God in the flesh. If ever there was a man.

From the gospels. As you read the gospels. Who never once disrespected God. It was Jesus. And yet here in this passage.

He is doing something only God can do. Forgive sin. And release a person from the misery of sin. The authority of Jesus in this passage.

Prompts us all to ask. The who question. Who really is Jesus of Nazareth? Who is this man.

Who speaks. About God. And does the kind of things only God can do. That's the question. Is it not? Who does he think he is?

[27 : 39] Who is this man. Jesus Christ. Who died on the cross. And on the third day. Rose from the grave. That's a question.

All of us. Surely have to wrestle with. It is the most important question. Any one of us. Will ever be faced with. Who.

Is. Jesus. Christ. Luke 5. 17 through 26.

Answers our questions. But it also questions our answers. Jesus Christ is more than a man. He is God in the flesh.

Which makes it all. So much more amazing. Because it was a life. Life. Which led to a cruel death. On the Roman cross.

[28 : 38] A life. Lived. And given up. To take away our sins. And give us new life in him. What way.

What does the way. What does the way. Jesus uses his authority. In this passage. Tell us about.

Who he is. And what kind of Lord and Savior. He can be.

To you. It tells us at least this much. Given such power. And love. Combined in one person. What is there not.

To love and trust. About Jesus Christ. What is there not. To love and trust. About Jesus Christ.