

The Authority of Jesus

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Date: 23 March 2025

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[0 : 0 0] The scripture readings from today are Deuteronomy 18, 15-22, and Matthew 7, 28-29. Deuteronomy 18, 15-22.

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you. From your brothers it is to him you shall listen. Just as you desired of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of assembly when you said, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God or see this great fire any more lest I die.

And the Lord said to me, They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.

And if you say in your heart, How may we know the word of the Lord has not spoken? When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken.

[1 : 1 9] The prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him. Matthew chapter 7, 28 and 29.

And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority and not as their scribes. All done. Amen.

Thank you, Danielle, for the reading. The last night we had our normal regular Saturday evening prayer, and the person leading prayer thought mistakenly at first that it was Pastor Moss who would be bringing the message this morning.

And I was tempted to say, let's pray that Pastor Moss comes back for Mr. Tripp early so that he could give the message, because I found this to be a challenging one.

But by the grace of God, here I am. All of us know our good friend in here, little Tyler, and he's probably in Children's Church now.

[2 : 2 8] And Tyler's my good friend, so I use him as an example to begin with. Imagine that Tyler would have come here right now and pushed me to the side and said, listen, I'm going to teach you guys today.

And he proceeds to teach, and while he's teaching, he gives us all sorts of orders and commands. He says, you're not listening, you listen. You're talking, stop talking.

We would all be shocked to see him display such authority. But maybe Tyler isn't actually the best example, because he might do a better job than me at bringing a message.

But I'll give you another example that I am sure will illustrate what I'm getting at here. So a few months ago, I received a WhatsApp video in a group that I'm in.

There was a video of a little girl. She was about 10 years old, and she was standing in a store in the United States. And she was bossing around her grandparents and other adults who were around her.

- [3 : 39] She was telling them to do different things, and she was even insulting them as she did it. Well, as you might imagine, people passing by, they couldn't help but stop.
- They watched this outburst play out. And their jaws were literally on the ground. You could say that they were astonished.
- And the passage that we are working through this morning, we see a similar reaction. Here was Jesus coming to the end of the Sermon of the Mount, and the crowds who listened to him were in total shock.
- They were stunned by the unprecedented authority with which he delivered the message. They were astonished. And I believe the reason that both crowds I just referred to, the one in the store, and the one that Jesus spoke to are astonished, are the same.
- They are witnessing an unusual display of authority. And they are wondering if that authority is legitimate.
- [4 : 58] I believe the answer to the scenario with the little girl is obvious. The little girl was acting as if she had authority. And people were shocked because in reality, she had no authority.
- In her mind, she was in charge. In her 10-year-old brain, she had the ability to order these adults around.
- They had to do what she said. But the truth is, that was only in her mind. She had no legitimate authority over anyone.
- Jesus spoke as one with authority. And we are told that his disciples were astonished. I've read that the translations of the original Greek word here mean that they were dumbfounded.
- They were shaken. And they were struck. Struck out with wonder. Pretty much, they had their whole world rocked by what Jesus was saying.
- [6 : 17] And no doubt, they were trying to determine if this authority with which Jesus spoke was legitimate. In other words, they were trying to determine did he really have the right to speak as he did?
- Well, this morning, I hope to show through Scripture that his authority was legitimate. Jesus had every right to speak as one who had authority.
- And I hope you will see that Jesus had a distinct manner because he was a distinct man with a distinct authority.
- And I have three points this morning along those same lines.
- A distinct manner, a distinct man, and a distinct authority. But first, let's look to the Lord in prayer.
- [7 : 28] Father, we come to you humbly. Lord, we come to you attempting to handle your word and to learn the truth of your word.
- Father, we come to wavy passages, Lord. Lord, with so much meaning and so much consequence to us.
- And we ask, Lord, that you would open our minds. We ask that you give us understanding. Lord, I come to you specifically with my limitations and acknowledging my failures.
- Lord, I come, Lord, asking you, Lord, that you would guard my lips, that you would guard my mind, that you would keep me from error and excess.
- Lord, I pray that you would cause me to decrease so that your Christ would increase. And may you be magnified for the good of your people, for the encouragement of all.
- [8 : 42] We pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. The Sermon on the Mount is the first extensive public teaching we see from Jesus in Scripture.

And right from the beginning, it is clear that he had a distinct manner. He had a way of speaking and a way of teaching that was unique to him.

He pronounced judgments. He gave instructions. And he issued commands on his own authority.

And this was in huge contrast to the other teachers. The scribes would not teach on their own authority. Instead, they would reference other sources, especially other established and well-respected rabbis.

They did not claim to have authority. They were merely passing on the traditions of being faithful to the practices that were handed down to them.

[9 : 56] But the unique authority of Jesus is seen through the Sermon on the Mount. We see it throughout. At the beginning of the Sermon, we see Jesus presenting what we now know as the Beatitudes.

And though some would argue that the Beatitudes hold similarities to Old Testament teachings, there's no doubt that nowhere else are these pronounced blessings given as a body of teaching as Jesus gives them.

They are totally his description of what his followers ought to look like and live like. He knew who was blessed and who was not.

So he pronounced these blessings known as the Beatitudes on the strength of his own word. Jesus was not passing down traditions.

Instead, he elevated himself above traditions. In fact, six times in chapter 5, we see him directly elevate himself above traditions.

[11 : 18] In chapter 5, verses 21 and 22, he says, So Jesus presents the traditional teaching and then he follows it up with his own declaration on that traditional teaching.

He clarifies Scripture, even raising the standard for his disciples to hold to. Then again, in verses 27 and 28 of chapter 5, he says, You have heard it was said, You shall not commit adultery.

But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

So we see him use these words again. But I say to you. And with those words, we clearly see him clarifying authority.

He uses his authority to clarify Scripture. And then he continues this pattern when speaking about divorce and speaking about swearing oaths, about revenge and whether or not we should love our enemies.

[12 : 58] And in each case, Jesus presents the prevailing traditional view. And then he immediately makes his own pronouncement on that topic. And these pronouncements called his followers to not only follow the law, but to have their hearts changed by God's word.

So it's not about just following some laws. It wasn't about the letter of the law. It was about the spirit of God's word.

It was about not allowing ourselves to even sin in our minds. or with our attitudes. And in calling his disciples to such high standards, Jesus shows his great authority.

It's important for us to realize what Jesus is not doing by elevating himself above traditions. because what Jesus is not doing was contradicting scripture.

What he was doing is actually refining our understanding of scripture. So at no point was Jesus opposed to scripture.

[14 : 25] At no point was he in contradiction of scripture. scripture. Although I'm sure to many of those who were hearing this for the first time they might have seen that he was.

I'm sure those who were listening to him were thinking about how he dared to take it upon himself to refine centuries of tradition and so many years of teaching.

there's no doubt in my mind that they were wondering what kind of man is this? What kind of man would be so bold in his teaching?

And the answer to their question is in my second point Jesus was a distinct man. Even from his first sermon Jesus' followers could tell that he was special.

The way in which he spoke showed that he was a man who did not get his authority from other men as the scribes tried to do. But his authority was directly from heaven.

[15 : 53] The passage that was read this morning from Deuteronomy 18 are the words of Moses to the people of Israel as they were about to enter the promised land.

He gives them instructions on how they ought to obey God in the land that they were about to enter. And just a few verses before that passage we see Moses warning the Israelites not to be like the people who had already settled in Canaan.

before them. He said those other nations were listening to fortune tellers and they were listening to people who practiced witchcraft and that was how they informed their lives.

They put their trust in evil practices that did not recognize the true and living God.

instead Moses promises the Israelites that God would actually raise up another prophet and that prophet would be like Moses and that prophet would be the one to whom the people should listen.

[17 : 14] And they would have listened to him because he would speak the very words of God as the passage says and I will put my words in his mouth and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

So you might say well Israel had many prophets after Moses and that spanned many years but Moses does not promise prophets it's not a plural word this promise is singular he promises just one prophet a single person so we can see that this is Moses giving God's prophetic promise of the Messiah the one through whom God would speak directly to his people it's the promise of the coming of Jesus Christ so Jesus Christ is like Moses in many ways and we can name a few of them firstly Moses brought miracles to the Israelites as a sign of God's commission and we see

Christ do that as well secondly Moses gave God's law to the people and even in the Sermon on the Mount we can see Christ as a law giver he not only comments on the law as the scribes did but he gives deeper interpretation to it so that we get more specific commands from it thirdly just as Moses led the people of God out of the captivity of Egypt Christ leads his people from their sin and leads them into the promise of eternal life and fourthly we can say that God spoke to his people through Moses as he speaks to us through Christ so Moses stood between God and the people as an oracle and as a mediator just as

Jesus stands between the father and his children so this last similarity between Moses and Jesus might raise a question in your mind several times this morning I've said that Jesus spoke on his own authority and now you're hearing me say that God spoke to the people through Jesus now I'm saying that God put his words into Jesus mouth and it might seem like a contradiction at first but it is not Jesus both spoke on his own authority and he spoke the words that God gave him to speak both things are true Jesus had a mission to fulfill he was to be the substitute for our sins he was to die a substitutionary death to pay our penalty for sin but we heard last week in the message that there was another part to the mission he was also to be our substitute with his life he was to be perfectly obedient to God which God would credit to us and speaking the word of God to God's people was in keeping with the obedience of Christ to God that was the role given to

Christ in his human nature but Christ also had a divine nature and this is why he transcends even the authority of Moses the apostle John after spending years living with Christ is able to explain this divine nature to us and he writes in John 1 verses 1 through 3 and we are all very familiar with this in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God he was in the beginning with God all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made here John points to the one who is the very word of God he points to Christ and his eternal nature because he was always with

[22 : 24] God the father and he points out that Christ is fully divine because he always was God Jesus Christ is creator of all things he is a man who was fully God there was never has been anyone like him and when we see that we can then understand the distinct authority that Jesus commanded so let's look at our third and final point a distinct authority the sermon on the mount is steeped in the transcendent authority of Jesus and I have to lean heavily on theologian John Stott in delving into this we've already briefly touched on

Jesus' authority as a teacher but in his book the message of the sermon on the mount John Stott points out that even the way in which Jesus chooses to convey the message of God is wrapped up in his own authority authority the prophets before Jesus often would use the phrase thus says the Lord to begin to convey God's messages to the people but Jesus never used that phrase instead he would often say truly truly I say unto you he would lean on his own authority this phrase by which Jesus appeals to his own authority is used by him six times in the sermon on the mount and while his teaching on his authority he taught in terms of absolute truth he didn't equivocate and he did not do it half-heartedly there was not even a thread of doubt in the way

Jesus taught he declared his disciples to be salt and light he was uncompromising and saying what the consequences of them losing their salty savor would be he was straightforward about how we should give to the needy and what our parents should be as we fast he never studied he spoke truth and he presented them as absolute truth he was a sure and authoritative teacher but he was more than a teacher because as he taught he tapped into the ancient wisdom the wisdom of his eternal deity he said he was the servant on the mount we also see

Jesus authority as a judge in the sermon Jesus reveals he was the authority to determine who would have eternal life he shows that he is the one to make the ultimate decision of who will enter the kingdom of heaven and who will not he says not everyone who says to me lord lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but he says the one who does the will of god will see the kingdom of heaven so Jesus paints this picture of a courtroom scene where those before him present their case to him and they'll appeal to him on many bases the basis of their works whether it's casting out demons or prophesying in his name or some other work but despite the evidence they offer

Jesus holds himself out as the one who is the final judge of their faith and he judges them not on their works but he judges them authoritatively on whether or not he knew them and it's easy to see his authority as judge when we consider that he also has authority as God as creator of all things he was the he has the right to determine the use and the fate of all things many people who deny Jesus divinity would challenge believers to show where Jesus himself ever claimed to be God in fact there are several places in scripture where Jesus claimed equality with God and in many of them we have to examine the context to rightly understand the claims and

[28 : 00] Jesus original audience understood the implication of his words they understood each time that Jesus dared to put himself on the same level of God that he was claiming to be God this is the case with the passage we just mentioned where Jesus says I never knew you depart from me you workers of lawlessness those listening to this knew that only God had the right to determine who would enter heaven and who would not so when Jesus places himself in the role of judge he assumes the role of God he has put himself on the same level as God and so with that Jesus is actually claiming to be divine and we see the same thing implied in the final beatitude if we look back at them we would see that the beatitudes call out general characteristics in the third person they say for example blessed are the merciful and blessed are the pure in heart but the final beatitude breaks that pattern it says blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven for so they persecuted the prophets who before you here

Jesus points to his disciples who would be enduring suffering they would be persecuted for following him that's very interesting that Jesus would draw a parallel between his disciples and the prophets who went before them Jesus expects his disciples to suffer for his name sake and he also compares them to the prophets who suffered for being faithful to God so if Jesus is comparing his disciples to the prophets then the logical implication of that parallel is at the same time Jesus is comparing himself to God so now we can truly understand that again he is placing himself on the same level as

God by doing that so again his original audience would have lashed on to this they would have understood his claim of equality with God and that's why they were so astonished Lord that knew him as the carpenter's son he'd grown up in Nazareth and now the same person was claiming to be God sure they would have been a complete shot so many people look at the sermon on the mount as a collection of moral teachings but if we understand the authority with which Jesus gave it we'd realize that it's not just moral lessons that everyone should try to live up to to truly understand the sermon on the mount we need to understand that

Jesus gives it not just as a teacher but also as the judge of our souls he gives it as a distinct man who eternally existed with God and who is God so now the claim that Jesus is God now comes to us and each one of us must give our own response to Jesus claim of being God writer C.S.

Lewis put it like this and I'm paraphrasing him but he says we are forced to choose between two alternatives either we see Jesus as God or we see him as a madman he is delusional one who would claim to be God but is not our response to the claim reveals whether we truly accept his divinity because if we accept his divinity if we truly believe that Jesus speaks with the same authority as God we will do as Deuteronomy 18 says we will listen to him and listening to him is not just hearing him it is actually doing as he commands if we truly believe that

[33 : 49] Jesus speaks to us as God we will do what Jesus himself in the Sermon on the Mount says that we should do we would not just say to him Lord Lord with our lips but we have to say to him Lord Lord with our lives that's the test and that's the proof of our belief and we have good reason to listen we have good reason to obey we have good reason to build our lives on the foundation of Jesus words because Jesus' claims have been vindicated by his resurrection from the dead and claiming to be God Jesus claims of the power over life and death and his resurrection brings ultimate credibility to that claim

Deuteronomy 18 tells us not to regard the prophet whose word does not come to pass but Christ's proclamations have come to pass he rose from the dead as he claimed he would his resurrection shows that Jesus had every right to have this distinct!

manner he was a distinct man and he had the very authority of God no Jesus can't be seen as a fake or fraud or an imposter he's not like the little girl that I told you about who gave orders to adults around her we can easily conclude that at best that little girl was misguided perhaps she was even delusional but Jesus on the other hand truly does have ultimate authority as we heard last week building our lives on any other authority would cause us to be lost because whatever authority it is it would not arise to the authority of

Jesus Christ who is not just a moral teacher but he is savior he is God overall ultimately he is the only authority to which we could appeal for an eternal hope and I pray that God would grant to all of us believing hearts and I pray that God would grant to all of us the grace to yield to the legitimate and the supreme authority of Jesus Christ let's pray that God and Father we have heard the words of Christ Lord I pray that we would soberly consider the weighty claims of

Christ and I hope that you would open our eyes to see that he claims not to be just a good man he claims not just to be a moral teacher but his claim is to be the eternal one who is forever with you linked to you and equal to you Lord would you grant us the power to believe and would you cause us Lord to build our lives on the very words of Christ whom we can trust not only in our life but for our eternity we pray this in Christ's name amen what