

Mark 11:27–33 — Who is the authority in my life?

February 2, 2020

Last week, we had an important lesson from Jesus in the Gospel of Mark on prayer. Jesus taught us how to pray in a way that makes a difference. There were two things that characterized effective prayers. They were faith and forgiveness.

Jesus told us that when we pray to God, we must pray to God with faith. That means we need to have confidence that God does hear our prayers and will respond to our prayers. We must not doubt that God is listening. We must not doubt God's ability to respond. Jesus told us God can literally move mountains in response to our prayers. That means God can do humanly impossible things in response to our prayers. But while prayers that make a difference are characterized by faith in God and confidence in a response from God, that doesn't mean God always responds to our prayers the way we desire. Last week we also learned that while we should tell God our will for our prayers, we must relinquish our will to God's will when it comes to the answer for that prayer. While we can tell God our wisdom for what the answer to our prayer should look like, we must trust God's wisdom in that answer. While we can tell God the timing of how we would like an answer to our prayer, we must trust God's timing in the answer to that prayer. The first quality of effective prayer is that it is prayer characterized by great confidence in the power and ability of God to respond when we pray.

The second quality of effective prayer that we learned last week is a forgiving heart. As Jesus has forgiven us completely, we must forgive others

completely. Others should be able to taste the full and complete forgiveness that Christ has shown to us by the way we fully and completely forgive them. If we are counting the number of times people sin against us, we are not forgiving them. We are just delaying our revenge.

Last week, we learned why we must forgive others completely from Matthew 18. Any sin God asks us to forgive from other people is nothing compared to the sin God has forgiven us of through Jesus. The sin God forgave us for through Jesus is a far greater debt than anything God asks us to forgive of another person. The only way for the debt of our sin to be forgiven was for God's own son to die in our place. That is a severe debt. In Matthew 18, Jesus described it this way. It is as if we were forgiven a \$6 billion debt of sin that we owed to God. It is only appropriate that we forgive the \$6,000 debt of sin that others owe us. An unforgiving Christian is a contradiction in terms. A Christian that holds a grudge is not a possible thing for a genuine Christian to do.

In this world, one of the distinctive things that sets us apart as Christians is the way we forgive others. One of the hallmarks of the Christian life is that we are a super forgiving people because we are a super forgiven people.

Last week, while we talked about forgiveness, because of time constraints, I didn't have a chance to touch on an important topic related to forgiveness. That is, we must understand the difference between forgiveness and trust.

Forgiveness is something we give to someone, just as Jesus has given it to us. Trust is something earned by someone. In situations where people sin

repeatedly against us, especially with no desire to change their behavior, we must offer them full and complete forgiveness, but that doesn't necessarily mean we must restore to them our full and complete trust.

This is a very important distinction. The reason this is important is because people who are abusers won't see this distinction. They will collapse forgiveness and trust together into one issue when they don't belong together. They do this because they are trying to weaponize forgiveness and use it as a strategy to continue in abuse. They will say, "If you truly forgive me, that means you should restore your full trust in me." They say this so they can continue to abuse. Let me give you an illustration.

Let's say your financial planner completely mismanages your money and loses all of your retirement. You discover that your financial planner wasn't managing your money well for a long time. He or she was putting your resources into high speculative and risky investments. This was not one bad decision but a continual pattern of poor decisions on his or her part. Now those unwise financial management has resulted in the loss of your retirement.

You have the painful meeting with your financial planner who appears contrite to you. In that conversation, your financial planner says, "Will you forgive me?" You know the answer needs to be, "Yes." There are no other options available to you as a Christian.

At this point we need to understand that forgiving that person doesn't mean we need to continue investing our money with him or her. A person may

have your forgiveness but has lost your trust because he or she demonstrated a continual poor pattern of behavior that doesn't seem to have an ability to change.

Let me move from a financial example to a relational example. Let's say a woman finds herself being abused by her spouse. He drinks at night and the more he drinks, the more abusive he becomes with his tongue and the more threatening he becomes with his actions. In the morning, when he sobers up he says to his wife, "Will you forgive me?" His wife forgives him completely and fully, but she notices that his actions don't change. Every evening after work, he turns to the bottle. He goes back to his abusive words and threatening behavior. In the morning, when he sobers up, he can't understand why his wife is so traumatized because he can't remember what happened the night before.

In the mind of that kind of abuser, each time his wife forgives him, that means she needs to completely restore her trust in him so he can abuse her again the next evening. That is not true. I once counseled a couple in this kind of a situation, and the wife eventually moved out because she was afraid for her life and safety. She told me that while she could forgive him, because over months and years he refused to stop abusing her, she had lost her trust in him. Unfortunately, even after this woman moved out temporarily, he didn't learn the lesson. He loved his bottle more than the woman in his life, and the relationship completely dissolved because even while forgiveness was given, eventually trust was destroyed.

Today, as we continue in the Gospel of Mark, we meet the religious authorities in Jerusalem. They were not interested in the topic of forgiveness. They were just the opposite. They were thinking murder. Turn to Mark 11:27.

While you are turning, know this little section we are about to study refers back to something we studied two weeks ago on that incredibly cold Sunday morning. On that Sunday, we saw Jesus went to the temple. In the temple, he overturned the tables of the money changers and drove out those selling animals from the Court of the Gentiles. Most of us visualize this as a small action of Jesus in a small area of the temple. As we learned two weeks ago, it was exactly the opposite.

The temple complex was 35 acres in size.

Most of the temple was a massive Courtyard of the Gentiles. I don't know how much of this

massive Courtyard of the Gentiles that covered 35 acres was filled with animal sellers and coin changers. I do know Jesus drove all of them out single-handedly.

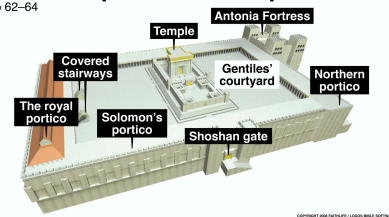
That is an impressive feat. This is like one person forcing all the vendors in the Clay County Fair to leave in one afternoon. That is crazy. This was done by

Jesus without help. Nobody could stop Jesus. It was Jesus gone wild.

In addition, Jesus would not let anyone carry anything through the temple courtyard. People were using the large courtyard as a shortcut to get to other parts of the city. Rather than walking around God's house, people were carrying things through God's house. God's house was not being used as a place of prayer and learning about God. It was being used as a shortcut. Jesus said the

Herod's Temple on the Temple Mount

Circa AD 62-64



money changers and animal vendors had turned his Father's house into a den of robbers. That week, Jesus violently took all of this corruption on by himself, driving the merchants out of the temple and shutting down their mini-mall. Jesus' clearing of the temple closed with these words.

And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. Mark 11:18 (ESV)

I told you they wanted to murder Jesus. The leaders of the temple were furious with what he did when he kicked out the money changers and animals sellers. "Who does Jesus think he is? Who gave him the authority to do this? We didn't!" They were especially upset over this because it hit them in the wallet. They were getting a financial kickback from renting the Courtyard of the Gentiles to the animal vendors. Anytime someone cuts into your income stream, people get angry. That is where we find ourselves this morning. We have angry religious leaders who thought Jesus had no authority to take over the temple, do what he did, and cut into their paycheck. They were going after Jesus. Let's see what happened.

And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, and they said to him, "By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?" Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me." And they discussed it with one another, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But shall we say, 'From man'?"—they were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet. So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." Mark 11:27–33 (ESV)

Obviously the key issue in this passage is authority. Who gave Jesus the authority to act like this? Who does Jesus think he is? What kind of authority does he think he holds? In their mind, Jesus is way out of line.

Jesus went to the most authoritative place — the temple. He undermined the most authoritative people in Judaism — the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin thought they possessed all the authority but Jesus didn't recognize their authority. Jesus didn't even send them a group text message asking for permission.

In fact, Jesus claims to have much greater authority than they held. That was extremely irritating to them since they think they were in charge.

How will we handle this study? The way we will handle this is that we will first look at the subject of Jesus' authority textually to see what the rest of the New Testament says about it. Then we will look at the authority of Jesus textually in this passage so we will see how we can apply it to our lives.

Jesus claimed incredible authority.

Jesus claimed all authority in the universe.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Matthew 28:18 (ESV)

At the end of his life, Jesus came out and clearly told the apostles how much authority he holds. He has all of it. There is no one else in the universe and there is nothing else in the universe that holds more authority than Jesus. This explains why he didn't think he needed permission from the Sanhedrin to clear the animal-selling crooks out of the house of God. Jesus is as high as you can go on the authority food chain. Paul said it this way:

...so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:10–11 (ESV)

Every created being on the earth and even under the earth will bow the knee to Jesus. Some will do it willingly, others unwillingly, but all will bow to Jesus' authority. Jesus holds the position of highest authority in the universe.

Jesus taught with authority.

And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. Mark 1:22 (ESV)

Jesus' teaching while on earth was a completely different style of teaching than the religious leaders of his day. All the other religious leaders needed footnotes. They needed a bibliography. Whenever they spoke, it was like writing a paper for high school English class. They needed to quote an authority so what they spoke was considered to have authority. Jesus was not like that. Jesus is the only person that didn't need a footnote and a bibliography. Everything he spoke was authoritative simply because he spoke it. We can see this in the way he taught. He quoted himself as the authority on issues.

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Matthew 5:38–39 (ESV)

Jesus said, "It doesn't matter what you have heard other people say on things. What matters is what I say on things." Jesus taught with authority.

Jesus cast out demons by his authority.

And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." Mark 1:27 (ESV)

Not only did Jesus teach with authority but his words were so authoritative that by simply speaking them he cast demons out of people. If you have been with us for the earlier parts of this study, your mind probably quickly races to Mark 5. In that chapter, Jesus cast an entire legion of demons out of a man, just by speaking a word. That is the authority of the words spoken by his voice.

You might remember that in Mark 5 we learned nobody was able to gain control of that demon-possessed man. Nobody was able to cast the powerful demons out of that man. When the demon-possessed man saw Jesus, the demons caused the man to fall on his face in front of Jesus. With just one word, all the demons were expelled and the man was restored to his right mind in a moment's notice. That is the kind of authority Jesus possesses — the authority to cast out demons by his word. Jesus has incredible authority.

Jesus forgave sins by his authority.

“But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” — he said to the paralytic... Mark 2:10 (ESV)

Jesus has authority to forgive sin. Nobody else can do that. As the religious leaders said in this passage, “Jesus can't forgive sin. Nobody can forgive sin but God alone.” Then Jesus told them, “To prove to you that I have authority to forgive sin, I tell this man take up his mat and go home.” The man who was lame for years was instantly healed. That means Jesus even has authority to forgive our sin. That is incredible authority.

Jesus will execute judgment by his authority.

And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. John 5:27 (ESV)

God the Father has given Jesus the authority to execute judgment. At the end of history, everyone will stand in front of Jesus and be judged by Jesus. If we have trusted him to forgive our sin, we will stand before him to be judged for how we lived. It will be a judgement to determine the rewards we will receive in heaven.

If someone has not trusted in Jesus and had their sin forgiven by Jesus, the judgement they will face in front of Jesus will not be to determine their rewards in heaven. It will be to determine the fair and just punishment for their sins in the Lake of Fire.

Jesus is the judge everyone will answer to and the judge everyone will stand before. Jesus has incredible authority as the judge of all the earth!

Jesus has authority to die and raise himself from the dead.

For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.” John 10:17–18 (ESV)

Did you realize that when Jesus was beaten, when he was whipped to the point of being unrecognizable, when he hung on the cross in utter agony, he did it all willingly. The chains that held his wrists when he was beaten and the nails that held his hands to the cross had no more strength to restrain him than a single strand of thread would to restrain us. Jesus was beaten and endured unspeakable agonies out of his love for us. He willingly went through the agonies of the cross to die in our places. Even the moment he died and gave up his spirit was not a moment when someone took his life from him. It was a moment when he determined to give up his life by his own free will. The last words from his

mouth and the last breath in his lungs were chosen by him as he chose the moment to separate his spirit from his body. None of us have that ability. Only Jesus has that kind of authority.

Even more amazingly, death could not hold him. Jesus had the authority to rise from death. Blowing death wide open by the authority and power given to him, he rose from the dead by his own power. That is amazing. Jesus possesses incredible authority.

I like to think of it this way. Before we do many things, we need to get permission. We need approval by our parents, approval by a board, approval by a supervisor. Jesus is the only one to live that did not need to ask permission from anybody to do things. He was the authority. He has all authority.

There is one possible exception to this.

The only authority in Jesus' life was God the Father.

The only authority in Jesus' life was God the Father. Jesus is equal in power to God the Father, but he willingly chose to submit his will to God the Father's will.

So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me." John 8:28 (ESV)

So Jesus was in complete sync with God the Father on every issue. Outside of God the Father, Jesus was and is the ultimate authority in this world. This is why Jesus didn't need to consult with the religious leaders. This is why Jesus didn't need to get a permit from them to clear out the temple. He acted on his own authority because he is the authority.

For obvious reasons, even though Jesus had performed countless miracles, the religious leaders of Israel had a hard time accepting Jesus as the ultimate authority even though he had already demonstrated himself to be the ultimate authority. The religious leaders were used to being in charge and Jesus' unwillingness to come under their control was a massive blow to their pride. In fact, it infuriated them.

Now we turn from looking at the authority of Jesus topically throughout the Bible to the authority of Jesus textually in this particular passage of the Bible. The topic of Jesus' authority is not confined to these verses. This is only the beginning of the topic. This discussion of who is really in charge begins here but continues until almost the end of Mark 12. Next week, Jesus will tell the parable of the tenants to illustrate God the Father's rejection of the religious leader's authority. After that, there are three conversations. In the first, Jesus targeted the authority of the Pharisees and why God rejected them. In the second, Jesus targeted the authority of the Sadducees and why God rejected them. Finally, in the last conversation, Jesus targeted the scribes and why God rejected them and their authority for his people. One by one, Jesus picked off every religious body in Judaism and showed why they were unqualified to lead God's people. That is what is in front of us in the upcoming weeks.

For this morning, let's look at this particular text, see how the religious leaders challenged the authority of Jesus, and how he responded.

The religious leaders challenged Jesus' authority.

And they came again to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him, and they said to him,

“By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?” Mark 11:27–28 (ESV)

This took place the day after Jesus cleared out the temple. Since the money changers and animals sellers were no longer in the court of the Gentiles, Jesus began walking around that courtyard, using it the way it was intended. It was originally created to be a place where people could come to hear God’s truth and a place for prayer. Jesus returned the Court of the Gentiles to that purpose. While the Gospel of Mark only tells us Jesus was walking around the temple, the Gospel of Luke tells us Jesus was not walking around aimlessly. He was teaching as he walked around. He was a mobile Bible teacher.

One day, as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up... Luke 20:1 (ESV)

What I love about this is Jesus was preaching and teaching the Bible. He knows life with God starts by hearing the Word of God. Since Jesus is the Word of God in the flesh, there could be no better preacher of the oral word of God than Jesus. Luke tells us Jesus wasn’t just preaching, he was sharing the gospel.

Jesus had taken over the temple and was conducting a Billy Graham crusade. There were thousands of people in the Courtyard of the Gentiles from around the world. Jesus was teaching them. He was telling the good news of God and calling them to trust in that good news.

I am sure Jesus talked about the problem of sin. I am sure he taught about the reality of judgment and hell. He undoubtedly talked about the burning inner desire each of us has for forgiveness from God and to be made right with God. I am sure he taught about the hopelessness of trying to make ourselves right with

God on our own. He also spoke about God's love for sinners. He spoke about forgiveness of sin and eternal life that can only come by faith in God. Jesus, who is the good news of God was busy speaking the good news of God to the people of God, a good news he came to make possible.

Can you imagine the smiles on people's faces as the good news of God began to dawn in their hearts about God's incredible love for them and commitment to forgive and save them?

The Gospel of Luke tells us how people responded to Jesus' preaching in the Court of the Gentiles.

...but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words. Luke 19:48 (ESV)

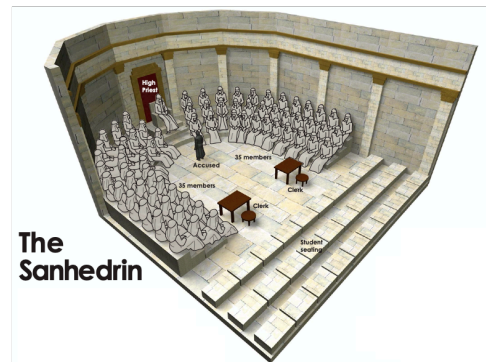
Think about this situation. Jesus came into Jerusalem with thousands of people cheering for him and singing his praises. The entire city was talking about Jesus. His entrance in the city was headline news. The next day, he cleared the 35-acre Court of the Gentiles that was filled with vendors selling stuff. We have a massive change in temple scenery. Here we are a day later and this 35-acre areas is now filled with people all listening to Jesus, hanging on every word he spoke. Can you understand why the religious leaders were completely freaking out at this point? Can you understand why they felt like Jesus had taken over the temple and Judaism?

Next, it tells us the chief priests, scribes, and elders all came to him. They wanted to know who gave him the authority to do and say the things he was.

Who was this group of men? They were called the Sanhedrin. They were the people that made up the ruling body in Judaism. There were 71 in the group.

While they were under Roman authority, they were the highest leaders for the nation of Israel. They made all the important decisions for the nation. They were similar in authority to our Supreme Court.

The group consisted of the chief priests. Those were the ruling priests and the highest priests. The scribes were the Bible lawyers in the group. They were the Bible experts. Lastly were the elders. These were wealthy and influential lay people. So the highest authority in Judaism was challenging Jesus' authority over of the most authoritative place in Judaism, which was the temple. Remember Jesus did all of this without asking the permission of the Sanhedrin.



We can understand why these men were shocked at Jesus' actions. Remember what we learned earlier — Jesus actually didn't need their authority because he is the highest authority.

Jesus challenged the religious leaders to make a decision that would demonstrate their authority.

Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me." Mark 11:29–30 (ESV)

This was not Jesus trying to be difficult. This was typical rabbinical style. Rabbis get to ask one question of each other. If they wanted to ask Jesus a question about their authority, he would only answer it if they would answer his question about John the Baptist's authority. Was the baptism of John the Baptist from heaven or from men? From heaven was shorthand for saying "from God." In

other words, was John the Baptist a prophet sent from God so they should listen to him or was he just a nutcase running half-naked around the woods in animal skins who ate too many toxic bugs so he scrambled his brain?

What Jesus did with this question was put them between a rock and a hard place. Jesus would only tell them about his authority if they would admit to accepting or rejecting John the Baptist's authority.

The reason he did this is because John the Baptist and Jesus were a package deal. To accept the authority of one meant you needed to accept the authority of the other. To reject the authority of one meant you rejected the authority of the other.

The reason John and Jesus went together was John the Baptist was very clear about his mission. He kept telling people he was preparing the way for Jesus. If you accepted John the Baptist as a prophet of God, that meant you needed to believe his word and accept Jesus as the very Son of God, the Messiah. Look how this is evident in John the Baptist's words.

He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said." John 1:23 (ESV)

John claimed all he was doing was preparing for the the arrival of God. If John the Baptist said he was preparing for the arrival of Jesus, that would solve the question on the authority of Jesus since Jesus is the Lord, our God. Look what else John the Baptist said about Jesus, his identity, and his authority.

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.'" John 1:29–30 (ESV)

John the Baptist identified Jesus as the Lamb of God. He also said that even though Jesus was born after him, Jesus existed before him. Jesus existed from eternity past. That means Jesus is God.

Let's see what else John the Baptist said about Jesus.

He must increase, but I must decrease. John 3:30 (ESV)

The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. John 3:35 (ESV)

John the Baptist had a very high view of Jesus and the authority of Jesus. John saw Jesus as the very Son of God in the flesh. If you accept John the Baptist's authority, then you need to accept Jesus as the ultimate authority, because that is what John said about him. It is a package deal.

The only other option is for the religious leaders to say John's baptism was just from man. That meant they thought John the Baptist didn't know what he was talking about. He was not a prophet from God. He was a fruitcake living in the woods that needed psyche medication. The Gospel of Mark very coyly tells us rejecting John the Baptist as a prophet from God was not an option the religious leaders could choose.

And they discussed it with one another, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But shall we say, 'From man'?"—they were afraid of the people, for they all held that John really was a prophet. Mark 11:31–32 (ESV)

When it came to their answer, the first thing they needed to do was have a meeting. The Greek word for discussing is the Greek word *dialogizomai*. It is used seven times in Mark, each time it is people trying to figure out a way to escape the logical conclusion of Jesus' words because they didn't like the answer. That is exactly what we have in this case.

Mark literally puts a blank behind the option of claiming John the Baptist was just a man. If the leaders tried to discredit John the Baptist publicly, things would have not gone well. At this point, the people believed John the Baptist was a great prophet of God. He was recently murdered by Herod so he was loved by the people. Mark tells us, we don't even want to think about what would happen if the religious leaders tried to claim John the Baptist was a nut case instead of a prophet.

While the Gospel of Mark does not tell us what would happen, the Gospel of Luke fills in the blanks and does tell us.

But if we say, "From man," all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet. Luke 20:6 (ESV)

The leaders of the people were worried they would be assassinated. They were worried they would lose their lives at the hands of the people if they publicly claimed John was a nutcase. So the religious leaders were caught. They either admitted John the Baptist was a prophet of God, then followed his words, which would mean admitting Jesus is the very Son of God who has all the authority in the world, or they needed to claim John was nothing more than a nut case in the wilderness. If they tried that, they would have been killed by the people.

Not knowing what to do, they were stuck.

In that moment, the religious leaders revealed their true character and why they were unqualified to lead God's people. Instead of being the one place God's people could find truth, they were nothing more than politicians, political hacks, and cowards who would only say what the people wanted to hear to keep themselves in positions of power. They were not interested in the truth. They

were more interested in maintaining their power over the people and bending the truth in any way necessary in order to achieve that goal.

The Gospel of John says it this way:

...for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God. John 12:43 (ESV)

They claimed to be authorities, but they showed they didn't have the guts to speak the truth. They were playing the people. Here is how they revealed their cowardice and inability to lead.

So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." Mark 11:33 (ESV)

Jesus trapped the most revered religious leaders into saying they didn't know the truth, which is why they were not qualified to lead God's people into the truth. They were nothing more than cowardly politicians.

What are we to learn from this? I have one big application that kept coming to mind as I studied this week.

Applications

Since Jesus holds the position of highest authority in the universe, have I given him the position of highest authority in my life? It is easy for us to be just like the Sanhedrin. We like to think we are in charge of everything. We like to think we should be in charge of our lives instead of Jesus being in charge of our lives. We like to think we have all the authority in this world when in reality it is Jesus who has all the authority in this world. We need to repent of trying to live our lives with ourselves in charge instead of him. What does this look like in everyday life? Where do we struggle to let Jesus be our authority?

If you are a teenager, when you are with your friends, it is easy to think and act like your friends are the authority in your life instead of Jesus being the authority in your life. There is a lot of peer pressure as a teenager. Teens will do almost anything to fit in with the group. Not all of that is wrong but many times our friends can lead us to do things Jesus would never want us to do. We always need to ask ourselves, “Am I doing this because I am trying to fit in with my friends and they have become the authority in my life or is Jesus the authority guiding my steps in this moment?”

Let’s look at the authority of Jesus in our parenting. As parents, we love our kids. We want to give them every opportunity to succeed athletically and academically. That is a good thing. We still need to ask ourselves how we are training our children to have Jesus as the authority in their lives because we demonstrate Jesus as the authority in our home. Have we spent time opening the Bible with our children? Have we spent regular time praying with our children? Are we using trips in the car for strategic conversations with our children about how the Bible informs the events we see on the news each day? Let’s just admit, it is easy to have our home look like every other home. It takes effort and strategic planning to not just tell our children but demonstrate to our children that Jesus is the authority in our home.

One last example of what this looks like is our giving and our spending. If Jesus is the greatest authority in our world, our giving and spending should reflect Jesus as the priority in our lives. Is all our money spent on the priority of entertaining ourselves or is it spent on the priority of enjoying Jesus and making

his name famous? Remember that Jesus is the authority who will be our judge. Every one of us will stand before him and be judged by him. On that day, when Jesus examines our checkbooks, they should reveal that Jesus is the authority in our lives.

As we close, I ask you, “Who is the authority in your life?” Are you like the Sanhedrin? Do you think you are in charge of everything? Is it Jesus, the one who has authority to forgive sin and raise us from the dead, the judge before who all of us will stand? Who is the authority in your life?



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, and time with his family. Feel free to contact him at www.Christ2RCulture.com (www.c2rc.com)

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