

# The Authority of Christ

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Date: 25 October 2020

[ 0 : 00 ] And today we're looking at chapter 21, verses 23 through 27.

And when he, that's Jesus, entered the temple, the chief priest and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching and said, By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority?

Jesus answered them, I also will ask one question. If you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?

And they discussed it amongst themselves, saying, if we say from heaven, he will say to us, why then did you not believe him? But if we say from man, we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.

So they answered Jesus, we do not know. And he said to them, neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. Let's pray together. Dear Heavenly Father, we again ask for your help in the preaching of the word.

[ 1 : 29 ] Even as we think of the subject of authority, Lord, we pray that the authority of the preaching of your word would be yours. That you would speak through your messenger, that you would be glorified in it. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Now, we just want to think back to where are we in terms of the Gospel of Matthew. And you may remember, we've now entered into the last week before Jesus' crucifixion.

So we're in the week leading up to the cross. And Jesus is now in the temple, and he's teaching. So let that sink in for a moment. You may imagine, just like we are today, gathered together in the church with me preaching.

Or maybe you think of a Sunday school and someone up in front teaching. And while he's teaching, he's interrupted by the chief priest and the elders. And they come to him asking him this question. Again, so just picture the sermon. And someone raises, I have a question. And the question is about the authority. What authority does Jesus have to teach these things? And you may remember, these are the religious leaders of the day.

[ 2 : 30 ] The religious authorities, we might say, in that day. They are the ones who should have welcomed and even promoted the coming of the Messiah. But here we see they continually oppose him.

And even while he's teaching, they're questioning him and challenging him. So as I said, here they're questioning his authority. And they want to know the source. Where did you get this authority? And I think there's no doubt that one of the reasons for this question is that there's some challenge here that they feel to their authority that they feel must be protected.

If they're the religious leaders of the day, they basically decide what happens inside the temple, who ought to be teaching. You may remember Jesus has just cast out the money changers. If they're the religious leaders in charge of what happens in the temple, they've allowed these money changers in and he's kicking them out.

Who told you you could do this? And so it's not just that they wonder about his authority, but they also feel challenged that their authority is being usurped.

In other words, their main problem with Jesus is that they had not granted him authority. They believed authority was theirs to grant. And if it didn't come from them, where are you getting this authority?

[ 3 : 43 ] Where's it coming from? Who told you you could do this? Matthew Henry says, Satan was in this.

And to hinder him in his work, note it cannot but be a trouble to a faithful minister to be taken off or diverted from plain and practical preaching by an unavoidable necessity of engaging in controversies.

As a pastor, I found that somewhat humorous. But just to begin with, he's saying Satan's behind this. Jesus is here. He's teaching people only to be interrupted about some controversy.

But as I said, as a pastor, part of the point he's making is that it's not good for God's messenger, God's speaker, to be interrupted or diverted by pointless controversies.

And he's saying there's an intentionality here, whether it be with the teacher, the chief priest and the elders, or behind the scenes, Satan pushing this.

[ 4 : 49 ] But there's a desire to put Jesus off from the work he's doing here. And so we cannot see it but otherwise, other than an attempt to thwart or challenge Jesus' teaching. So I want to look at, I have three points to the message I want us to look at.

First, Jesus' authority challenged. Secondly, Jesus' authority confirmed. And then finally, Jesus' authority considered.

So we're going to see first how they challenge it. Secondly, that Jesus does have authority. And third, I want us to consider what authority is it that Jesus has. So first, Jesus' authority challenged. Well, we're going to see later in the second point that Jesus' authority was demonstrated by the works that he's doing.

What he's doing actually affirms his authority. And so had these religious leaders, the chief priests and the elders, had they considered the works and the teaching themselves, there would be no need for such a question as that that they're asking.

It would be evident to them that this authority can only come from God. How else could any man have the authority to do the things that Jesus was doing? But they instead look for authority for him to be allowed to do them.

[ 5 : 58 ] So what I'm saying is instead of looking at the works themselves and saying, where could such authority come? They're actually bothered by the fact that he's doing the works. Who told you you could do those things?

Who's allowing you to do them? Who gave you permission? And we could expand and say, what is it that Jesus has done? Well, we've seen already he's cast out those money changers we've talked about.

He's teaching in the temple. He received cries of Hosanna as he entered the city. But we could go even further back and say, he's healed the lame, given sight to the blind, cast out demons.

And their concern is, who told you you could do those things? We're not allowing you to do those things. And so they're actually bothered by the fact that Jesus is performing miracles in God's name.

I think more so than them really wondering if Jesus is allowing this. If you look at the works themselves, how else could Jesus have done them, apart from the fact that God gave him the power and authority to do it?

[ 7 : 05 ] But they're not looking at that. They're more concerned with the fact that he's doing them at all. You shouldn't be doing this. And I think, again, if you'll forgive me for attributing some motive, but I think, again, there's some challenge that they're concerned with their own authority.

If Jesus is doing that, we're not doing that. He looks better than we do. Who told you? Who's allowing you to do this? So the question is about John's baptism in particular.

That's Jesus' response as he's challenged is to point them to John's baptism. And as we think about this question that Jesus asked to the religious leaders, he doesn't answer the question directly.

He said, I'll ask you one question, verse 24. If you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?

So that's the question Jesus answers in response. And, of course, when Jesus says the baptism of John, I think he means not only the physical act of baptism, but John's whole teaching. What he's teaching of repentance, everything he said about the baptism, even if you think about the fact that John has pointed people to Jesus as the Christ.

[ 8 : 17 ] You remember John's words when he first beheld Christ? Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. And I say when he first beheld him. There's also this instance when he encounters Jesus when he's in the womb and he leaps for joy.

But as an adult, when he encounters Jesus, he says, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Where's John's message coming from? John's calling people to repent and be

baptized.

Where's that coming from? Did he receive it from heaven, from God? Or is it something from man? Did he invent this himself? It's a question we could ask probably of any teacher today. Is the message they're teaching, is it a message from God?

Or is it a message from man? And that's really a good question that we might ask, right? Where's this message coming from? By what power, by what authority was John doing the work he did? And if they gave no answer, excuse me, if Jesus gave no answer to their question initially, by what authority, then it would be presumed that he had no authority.

[ 9 : 26 ] And if he confessed that it was from God, then they would accuse him of blasphemy. And they would probably, if we just look at the Gospels and what happens with Jesus so often with the religious leaders, they'd probably say, show us some sign to prove that it's from God.

And we've, I think, even laughed at this in the past. We look at all the things Jesus has done, he's shown plenty of signs that it's from God. But that probably would have been what happened. And so it seems as though they put Jesus in this box with a question.

And we're going to see more of this. We read even one instance of that a second ago. But over and over again, we're going to see they try to catch Jesus to some question. And so if Jesus doesn't give an answer, well, then he doesn't have authority to do this.

If he doesn't have authority and he's doing it anyway, then he's guilty. But if he says his authority is from God, then they would accuse him of blasphemy or ask him to prove it. And either way, it doesn't serve the purpose of what Jesus is doing.

So instead he asks them this question about John and his ministry. And I think we see that they're not asking to learn from Jesus.

[ 10 : 35 ] In other words, they don't really want to know where the authority is coming from. They're not asking to worship. This isn't one step in them becoming a Christian. Tell us about your authority. If it's from God, we'll believe in you.

Why are they asking these questions? I think the whole purpose is for accusation, to be able to accuse Jesus, to be able to have some reason to condemn him. Even if we think about what's going to happen later in the week, we know that the cross is coming.

This is probably already in the hearts of some of these leaders. It may be already to have some reason to accuse him, to send him to the cross, to have him put to death. Now, it may seem as though Jesus' counter question is just to avoid answering the question.

Have you ever seen, I saw some little video of this once before, where someone was saying, you know, anytime someone asks you a question, you answer them with a question. So you absolutely avoid answering any questions.

And it's humorous. It's a comedy. You know, someone asks him a question, he just asks another question. It keeps going on and on and on. And he just never says anything. And so is Jesus just avoiding the question? Is he scared? I don't think so at all.

[ 11 : 39 ] I think what Jesus asked him is actually very pertinent to the discussion itself. So Jesus asked him about John's baptism. Where did it come from? Is it from heaven?

Is it from God? Or is it from man? And so if they were to say that John's message was from men, because he did not know miracle to prove it was from God, well then where does all Jesus' miracles come from?

So they might say, well, John's teaching is from man. He never did any miracle to prove it. But Jesus did. And so if they say that his is from man, then what proves the difference between a message from man versus a message from God?

If it's the signs and miracles, then Jesus has done those already. And if they acknowledge it's from God, and John testified to all that Jesus was the Christ, that's not just a question of why don't they believe John in terms of baptism, but why don't you believe John about me?

If John's message is from God, and John said that I'm the Christ, then you don't need to ask where the authority comes from, do you? You know they answered that already.

[ 12 : 50 ] Now Matthew actually focuses in on another issue altogether. We see them debating amongst themselves, and they trying to decide what to say.

And they said, if we say from heaven, he will say to us, why then did you not believe him? And again, I think part of that is, why don't you believe him? Not just about the baptism, but about who I am. That I am the Lamb of God, that I am the Christ.

But if we say from man, we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet. So in particular, they're fearful of what other people will say, if they condemn John in this instance. So I think Jesus knew that they would not answer for cowardice. I mean, really, they don't answer out of fear. And thus, the issue in the confrontation was disarmed. And so I do think he's intentionally disarming the conversation.

They set a trap for Jesus, and they really were caught in their own trap. 1 Corinthians 3, 19 says, the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, he catches the wise in their craftiness. [13:55] God catches the wise in their craftiness. As we as a family read through the Proverbs, over and over again, we see things like, the fool sets a trap, and he falls into his own trap. And here we have such an example of the foolish man, the wise in the world's eyes, being put to shame, and being exposed as foolish by God and his wisdom.

Now notice what motivates their answer. They discuss together what they're going to answer. So questions asked to them, they don't answer it. They go back, and they're whispering, they're talking, well, what do we say?

If we say yes, and this is going to happen, if we say no, this is going to happen. Now, forgive me for my cynicism, but what this reminds me, I mean, it's fear of man that's driving their whole discussion. And my cynicism is, I'm sorry, but this is so much like the politics that so define our country in this day and age. What am I going to answer to this question, whether it be a debate or whatever? Well, let's poll the whole country and see what people are thinking. And if I want people to like me, because I'll answer this. And so, it's almost impossible to find out what anyone actually believes anymore, because what motivates answers is, what are people going to think about me if I answer this way?

[15:09] Will people still vote for me if I say what I really believe? And so, here we have these religious leaders who in many ways are functioning what we might think of as a politician. They're concerned with, what are the people going to think about me?

If I tell the truth and say that his message is from God, then the people are going to know that my challenge to Jesus is not authentic.

And if I lie and say it wasn't from God, then they're going to be upset with me because they think it was from God. They think he was a prophet. And so, I don't know the answer. And it's really striking that here's the religious leaders and they're asked a simple question, here's a man preaching, is his message from God or is it from man?

Well, we don't know. Why don't they know? I mean, these are the religious leaders who should be able to give some kind of answer where this message is from. They don't know not because they don't know. When they say they don't know, they mean, I'm not going to answer because I'm afraid I'm going to upset somebody.

They're the religious leaders but they confess that they're ignorant of John's message and its origin. They lack the authority even to judge in this matter. It's ironic, isn't it? They're asking Jesus, where does your authority come from?

[16:30] We're the ones with authority. Okay, well tell me about John. Well, I don't know. They lack authority in that. And I think there's an application even for religious leaders today for pastors and elders that we can't lead by fear of man.

And I'll confess, that's tempting for anyone, isn't it? You make decisions and some of those decisions are very hard to make and you don't really want to upset people. You don't want people upset with you.

But the man of God doesn't, he's not given that option. Especially in matters of God's word, truth, messages and where they come from. There are times when we have to call something out as false teaching.

Even though people aren't going to like it. But they won't do it out of fear. Now, that really addresses this interaction between the two.

But what I want us to consider for a second is Jesus' authority. I think we know Jesus had authority, but I want to, for a moment, look at his authority confirmed. Matthew is focused throughout this book on the coming of the kingdom.

[17:40] Right? We've talked all about that this is the gospel of the kingdom. He's talking about the coming of the kingdom. And the kingdom's coming because of why? Because of the coming of the king.

Right? So, Matthew all along in this gospel has painted Jesus as the king. The Davidic king, the one who's fulfilling the Davidic covenant. And there's a king of authority.

So, part of Matthew's argument all along has been that Jesus is a man of authority. As king, Jesus is the one with authority. And especially if we think about Jesus being the Davidic king, the king who will reign forever on the throne, then there's no one who has greater authority.

So, we see in the gospels in John chapter 3, we see even some of the religious leaders acknowledge this. So, in John 3, verses 1 through 2, we see the story of Nicodemus.

Now, there's a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night. Now, why is he coming to Jesus by night? And he said to him, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.

[ 19 : 00 ] So, Nicodemus even says that the authority is from God. Isn't that what that means? We know that you are a teacher come from God. Where's your authority? What's the source of Jesus' authority?

As a Pharisee, does he say, I know? What does he say? We know that you are a teacher come from God. And what's the evidence of that? For no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.

Now, here we have in Matthew 21, it's, we're told the chief priests and the elders. Here we're talking about Pharisees, but again, we see the religious rulers, the religious leaders of Judaism saying, we know that you've come from God.

And why do we know you come from God? Because of the signs you do. No one else can do those apart from God. And I think what Nicodemus is affirming is true for him and we, whoever the we is, I assume it means some of the Pharisees and he's coming to him by night.

There's another instance in which you may remember the man who was blind, who was healed and his parents are asked, was he born blind? And they, they refuse to answer the questions and we're told that it was because that the leaders had declared that if anyone professed Jesus to be from God, he'd be cast out of the temple.

[ 20 : 20 ] So I ask you, why is he coming at night? Because what Jesus just said was enough to get him excommunicated if he had confessed this. And so he comes at night. But we have some acknowledgement that the religious leaders knew that the works Jesus were doing were affirming the fact that he's from God.

There's no other way that could be done. And so when the gospel of Matthew describes Jesus' teaching in chapter seven, it says, and when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching.

Do you remember why the crowds were astonished at Jesus' teaching back in Matthew seven? I'll look this week. Last Sunday marked two years since we started Matthew. So if that's true, Matthew seven probably was 17 months ago.

So you may not remember, but Matthew seven, here's the answer. For he was teaching them as one who had authority and not as their scribes. So again, there's this contrast between the scribes, the religious leaders of Jesus today who teach with no authority and Jesus who's teaching with authority.

And so here we see Matthew focusing in on the idea of authority. James Boyce actually points out in his commentary the frequency of this theme throughout the gospel of Matthew. So I've already mentioned to you chapter seven.

[ 21 : 36 ] In chapter eight, the centurion acknowledged his authority, comparing it to his own authority as a military commander. Just say the word and my servant will be healed, for I myself have a man under authority with soldiers under me.

Then chapter nine, Jesus healed the paralyzed man so that you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins. And the people marveled that God had given such authority to men.

And then in chapter 21, the chapter we are studying now, the word authority occurs four times, twice in the lips of Jesus' accusers, and twice in his response. So the idea of authority is a theme throughout the book, but we see Jesus affirming his authority and his authority being affirmed already in the book of Matthew.

Now let's think for a moment about the book of Matthew. Think of how Matthew ends. The ending of Matthew is probably one of the most famous endings to any of the gospels. Matthew kind of ends

with the Great Commission, where Jesus says, remember what Jesus says in the Great Commission?

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, and behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

[ 23 : 01 ] So consider where the gospel answers. I think here's an answer for the religious leaders. By what authority do you do this? And here's Jesus saying at the end of the gospel, all authority in heaven and on earth is mine.

It's mine. It belongs to me. And we're told it's been given to him. It's been granted to him. Now I think even part of that is the result of his redemptive work on the cross and his resurrection. But this authority, all authority in heaven and on earth, and we have to understand that encompasses all things. We sometimes maybe think of heaven as some place upward. We just point up like it's in outer space somewhere. But when we understand when he's saying all authority in heaven and earth, we're saying in the spiritual realm and in the physical realm, in all that exists, all authority is Christ.

It's his. It belongs to him. And so Matthew is pointing this to this authority. He's affirming it as we see Jesus' words there or confirming it as we see Jesus' words there in the Great Commission.

[ 24 : 06 ] Now, I want us to consider what does that mean? What does it matter? Why does it matter that Jesus has this kind of authority? Well, James Montgomery Boyce goes on to point out three important aspects of Jesus' authority that we see expressed in Matthew.

And I want us to take some time to look at all three of these in greater detail. He mentions these three. He says Jesus' authority is God's authority. Jesus' authority validates his teaching. And Jesus has authority to forgive sin.

And so I want us to take some time to expand on each of these three and consider why these matter. Why is it important that Jesus has this authority? Well, first, Jesus' authority is God's authority.

I mean, first, Jesus is fully God. He is the God-man, God incarnate. And he has inherited authority as God and is the creator of the universe, all that's in existence.

All that was made was made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. And so when you think about having authority, the creator of something has authority over that which is created.

[ 25 : 15 ] created. It's that creator-creature distinction again. God and Jesus Christ is the creator, we are the creature. And so we see God's word conclude things like, who are you, oh man, then, to question back to God?

Shall the thing formed say to him who formed thee, why did you make me like this? We don't have a right to say that. We can look at our, I mean, all of us are different physically in appearance. appearance. We can look at our appearance and say, God, why did you make me have a large nose? And God's answer, why are you laughing? God's answer is, who are you, oh man, to question me?

God has the right to do with that. So God has authority over the creature to do whatever he wants to. He is the creator. And so Jesus' authority extends to all things because he is the creator and all things were made through him.

His authority is inherent in the fact that he is God. And so the authority is further granted to him in accordance with his atoning work on our behalf.

[ 26 : 22 ] I think that's why we see in the Great Commission where it says, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. I think we talked some about this with Jesus' temptation when the devil offered him all the kingdoms of the earth.

And I said, this wasn't some vain offer. I believe that Satan had authority over the kingdoms of the earth. God had granted him authority to basically wreak havoc amongst the world that was walking in darkness apart from the gospel.

You hear this one small place of light there in Israel. Occasionally we see places like Deneva, the gospel goes forth in small, even sometimes powerful ways. But that Satan had authority over the world.

And then by the time we get to the Great Commission, he says, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Why is that? Because Satan has been defeated. He's been triumphed over at the cross.

Jesus has been resurrected from the dead. He now has that authority. And so we talked about even the temptation. What Satan is really tempting Jesus with is an easy way out.

[ 27 : 28 ] I will give you the authority that will one day be yours without you having to die for it. Without you having to pay the price for people's sins. Bow your knee to me and I'll give you that authority. But Jesus doesn't do that.

He goes to the cross. He dies for our sins. And God the Father gives him all authority on heaven and earth. And so when we think about that authority that he has, it's God's authority that's been granted to him by God the Father.

It's been given to him. I want to and maybe I should save this for later, but let me just say, when we think of the Great Commission again, Jesus says, all authority on heaven and earth has been given to me.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

Why does it matter that Jesus is with us always to the end of the age? He's just given you a command, hasn't he? Go therefore, you go and make disciples and I'm with you.

[ 28 : 33 ] So by what authority do we go and make disciples? Jesus' authority, which is the very authority of God. This is why this matters. We're called to go out and by what authority can we make disciples?

Not because I said so, not because I figured this out or because I'm smart. No, it's because of God's authority. Jesus is with us as we go out and we share the gospel and as we make disciples, as we teach men to obey all that he's commanded.

It's Christ's authority that goes with us. If we think about even again the Great Commission, he has all authority in heaven and earth, there's no greater authority.

There's no higher authority that we might imagine. The very authority that Jesus has is the authority of God himself. Secondly, we see that Jesus' authority validates his teaching. He deferred to no other authority.

He taught by his own authority. We've seen this already with the distinction that was made between Jesus and the scribes. Jesus amazed the people because he taught as a man with authority.

[ 29 : 40 ] Later on, we see in Matthew 11, 2-6, the interaction with John the Baptist, you may remember that. Now, when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, Are you the one who is to come or shall we look for another?

And Jesus answered them, Go and tell John what you hear and see. The blind receive the sight and lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.

And blessed is the one who is not offended by me. So, when Jesus' authority is questioned by John the Baptist, are you the Christ? What's Jesus' answer? Look at what I do.

Look at the miracles I've done. Now, I didn't include all this in this sermon, but we did and now Jesus' name, look, I'm doing what was prophesied would be done.

And so, his authority is validated by what he does. We were studying this morning in Sunday school, the book of Titus. As we were studying through the book, we were talking about Paul's criticism of the false teachers.

[ 30 : 50 ] And Paul's criticism of the false teachers, one of the things he says was, their words testify to the fact that they're false teachers. They're living a message inconsistent with the gospel. They're not living like Christians.

And we can almost imagine this, the opposite extreme here with Jesus. Jesus is saying, look at my works, and they testify to the fact that my authority is from God. It validates it. Thirdly, we see, and perhaps we can say even most importantly, Jesus has authority to forgive sin.

Now, I read earlier a brief portion of Matthew 9. I'm going to read a larger bit, but this is what Jesus said to the paralytic. Take heart, my son, your sins are forgiven. And behold, some of the scribes said, to themselves, this man is blaspheming.

But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, why do you think evil in your hearts? For which it's easier to say your sins are forgiven or to say rise and walk. But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, he said to the paralytic, rise, pick up your bed and go home. So what's the testimony to the scribes and to us and to the world that Jesus has authority to forgive sins? He holds a paralytic. So that authority that we just talked about in the second point that it validates his work, his authority is validated by his actions.

[ 32 : 10 ] We see also here that that authority in particular proves that he has authority to forgive sin. Maybe I could say it a different way. The miracles that Jesus does, the works that he does, testify to his authority to forgive sins.

They're evidence that he has authority to forgive sin. Now consider again the question we have from the religious leaders here. Who gave you the authority to do these works? And you realize how backward that is.

Had they examined the works themselves they should see the authorities from God. And in fact this proves that he has authority to forgive sin. So our response is not who gave you authority but what's our response?

Lord forgive my sins. Forgive my sins. And so the miracles were the testimony to the power he possesses to forgive sin. He can forgive sin because he died for sin.

He paid the price for forgiveness. So Jesus and God the Father as well will they don't forgive sin by ignoring it but Jesus forgives sin by dying for it.

[ 33 : 20 ] And so the authority he had to forgive sin was because he was going to die for it. He was going to the cross even later this very week he would die. And again when we consider authority no one else could possess such authority.

This isn't just the authority of heaven and earth that we looked at earlier that I said no one else could possess. But no one else can possess the authority to forgive sin. Because no one else can die for sinners but the God-man Jesus Christ.

And so we're told in Acts 4.12 There is no other name under heaven given among men by which men must be saved. This is the one name. The one name with the authority to forgive sin.

The one name with the authority to save. And so let's just consider an application. What does this mean for us? Well I think one thing we have to understand is that part of salvation is acknowledging Jesus' authority.

Acknowledging Jesus' power. Now I'm not arguing that this is part of a gospel formation or formula that we see in the gospels where someone is told to believe in Jesus' authority but in some way acknowledging that he is the Lord.

[ 34 : 30 ] We must believe he is God and we must submit our lives to his rule and to his authority. And so the very question these religious leaders testify to the fact that they're not saved.

Salvation is acknowledging Jesus has the authority and submitting yourself to that authority. And so if that's our first point that part of salvation is acknowledging Jesus' authority, submitting your life to his authority, secondly we would say some will not enter the kingdom because they will not acknowledge his authority.

There will be some people who will be eternally condemned because they're unwilling to submit to Jesus' authority. Now one major reason for this may be fear of others.

What will other people think of me? I think there will be many people perhaps even in the church who will hear the things of Jesus and believe them to be true but never actually profess faith in Jesus Christ, never actually become a Christian.

I think one reason for that is because of fear of what other people will say. John 12 42 Nevertheless many even of the authorities believed in him but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it so that they would not be put out of the synagogue.

[ 35 : 48 ] So here we have an example it says many even of the authorities believed in him. To what extent did they believe in him? Was it salvific? Was it a saving faith?

Or did they just believe he was who he said he was? Well, I tend to believe this wasn't a saving faith because in reality they refused to profess it. Why?

Because they get kicked out of the synagogue. And so if I believe Jesus is who he says he is and go to him for salvation then I lose my hope of salvation within the church, the synagogue. And so when I'm faced with a choice do I do it based on Judaism or do I do it based on Christ?

It's not enough for me to commit to that. And for fear of man, for fear of being or the Pharisees of being kicked out of the church, they won't do it. And so part of me wonders are there some in this room today who are one of those who believe who Jesus says he is?

Maybe who believes his authority but will not confess it for fear. You're unwilling to profess to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Maybe even the fear is that you're unwilling to give up the authority that we imagine we have ourselves.

[ 37 : 01 ] I think we were talking this morning in Sunday school about societies and the different cultures. That might be one aspect that we could say defines American culture, isn't it? We have authority.

We're self-determining. We can do what we want to do. And do we sometimes shrink back in fear that following Jesus means I can't do what I want to do anymore?

Think back to that Great Commission. Go therefore and make disciples, teach them to obey all that I have commanded. Maybe we want to acknowledge Jesus is who he says he is, but we don't want to be taught to obey all that he's commanded.

And I think that's part of what salvation is. And so I want to encourage you to submit your life to Christ. To not question his authority like these religious leaders, but to submit your life to his authority.

The reality is that you're only delaying the inevitable. Because there's coming a day when everyone will acknowledge Jesus' authority and bow to that authority.

[ 38 : 15 ] Philippians 2, 9-11. Therefore, it's because of Jesus' atoning work. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that in 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. So there in Philippians we have a picture painted for us of what things will be like when Christ returns. There's coming a day when every knee will bow.

And what does a knee bowing mean? But they're going to acknowledge his authority. They're going to submit to that authority even though there's still rebellion there. They're going to know it's Christ, that he has the authority.

Every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth. Everyone who's living, everyone who's lived, and every spiritual being will bow the knee.

When we consider that day, how foolish would it be for us to shrink back in fear now of bowing the knee only to one day face the judgment of God and bow the knee by force.

[ 39 : 30 ] Bow the knee even while we're in opposition. So I want to encourage you as we look at this that Jesus has authority.

That authority is confirmed by his work. And we're going to see even as the gospel progresses on Jesus has the authority to forgive sins. He alone has that authority. And so I want to encourage you to go to Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

Submit your life to him. Don't be like these religious leaders who challenge the authority out of fear of man. Perhaps even out of fear that they would lose what little authority they imagine that they have now.

But one day every knee will bow. And my hope and prayer for all in this room is that today would be that day. That your knee would bow long before the day of judgment.

Let's pray together. Oh Lord we thank you for your word and how it instructs us even how it warns us to flee the wrath to come.

[ 40 : 39 ] That we would not be like those who would believe in Christ but never believe unto salvation. Never profess the name of Christ.

Because of fear of what others might think or what might happen to us. Or even fear of giving up what we love to do. But Lord that we would submit our lives to Christ.

We thank you for the glory of our Savior. Our King and our Creator. That all authority is given to him on heaven and on earth.

And that one day every knee will bow to that authority. Lord we know that even now Christ is seated at your right hand that he's reigning but we live in this time almost of transition where even though Christ is reigning not every knee has bowed yet.

But Lord we know in the consummation that we will all realize him to be king. And Lord we pray that that would not be a source of fear for us. But a source of joy of hope that we would profess faith in

Christ now that we would put our trust in him our Savior.  
[ 41 : 51 ] We pray this in his name. Amen.