

The Authority of Jesus Christ

Gospel of John

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I invite you to turn with me in your Bibles to John 2. We're going to take a one-week detour from James which we have been looking at on Sunday mornings for the last number of months, and we're going to go to John's Gospel, John 2:13 through 22, to an account from the very beginning of Jesus' ministry demonstrating with great clarity and force the authority of Jesus Christ. In fact, that's the title of the message, "The Authority of Jesus Christ."

There are many things that speak to us of his authority. I mean, when he spoke himself, when he talked, we see in Matthew's Gospel when he finishes preaching the Sermon on the Mount, the people marveled that he spoke as one having authority and not as the scribes. His commanding presence, his voice, one could tell that this was more than a man, more than a mere man speaking.

We see it in his signs and wonders, the great miracles that he did. But the ultimate thing that distinguishes Jesus as the supreme authority is the resurrection from the dead, the empty tomb. That is what sets him apart from every other claim to authority. The verse that was read earlier in Romans 1:3, that the Gospel is the story of Jesus "born a descendant of David according to the flesh, but declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." That word "declared" in Romans 1:3, it means "to be distinguished; to be set apart." In fact, it's the Greek word "horizo," which is a verb which means "to set apart; to designate; to declare," but it has the idea of distinguishing and separating. Horizo, the word we get "horizon" from. The horizon as you look off into the distance, you see the boundary between the earth, the physical earth and the heavens. That's the horizon. It's that which sets apart. So Paul is saying in Romans 1:3 that what sets Jesus apart and declares him to be the Son of God distinct from every other person who has ever lived is the resurrection from the dead. The fact that his tomb is empty.

There are many who have claimed to speak with authority throughout history: Mohammed, Confucius, Buddha. But you can visit many of their tombs. Jesus' tomb is empty. His body, his earthly physical body now glorified, is enthroned at the right hand of the Majesty on High. That is the glory of the Christian Gospel.

So we want to consider this issue of authority today and the implications for our lives, and how that flows from this central reality of the Gospel, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The issue of authority is really the quintessential problem that mankind faces in every age and in every place. It is the systemic problem of every son and daughter of Adam, that is, who is my authority. Since sin entered the world, we make ourselves our own authority. The word "authority" itself is defined by Merriam-Webster as "the power to influence or command thought, opinion or behavior." So the power to influence or command what we think, what we believe, what we do, that is our authority, and since sin has entered into the world, man by nature claims that authority within himself. The problem for every human being in every place, in every time, is what was described in the book of Judges describing events that happened between 1350 and 1050 BC. We hear a refrain at the end of the book of Judges that is true today, that is, that in those days there was no king, everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Because there was no clear authority, they did what was right in their own eyes. You know, that's what's really the problem with the world today. It's a problem in our lives individually, and it's the problem in society corporately.

We were talking about it in men's Bible study on Friday morning. One of the guys brought up the Al Mohler briefing from Thursday morning. Al Mohler, if you're not familiar with him, he's the president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and one of the brightest evangelical minds alive today, and he has a daily thing called "The Briefing" in which he basically talks about the news events of the day from a Christian worldview and perspective, biblical analysis of what we see in the world. So the briefing on Thursday, he described something that probably for many of us if we had heard this, we see evidence around the same thing and it troubles our hearts. In his briefing on Thursday, he talked about an article in the New Yorker magazine called "Desmond is amazing and he's cooler than you." Now, I'm not going to go much into this but just to give you a few of the salient details about this article in the New Yorker magazine, "Desmond is amazing and he's cooler than you," was about a 10-year-old boy who cross dresses and who performs as a woman. Since he was two years old, he wanted to become a woman. It started evidencing itself as his mother watched a TV show about cross-dressing on TV and this little boy now dresses up in girls' clothes, wears high heels, makeup, and false eyelashes, and the whole article was celebrating this, that this 10-year-old boy is living like this. Mohler shared how what we see is that the emphasis of the culture is not just to get us to accept the deviant but it is to make a new normal; that this is normalcy what 10 years ago we would have not even been able to accept. We would've thought, "What kind of weird thing is going on?"

There is this rush to make us change what we think about life and basically what's happening is, this whole gender identity thing, is the individual becoming his own authority to the ultimate degree. You can become whatever sex you want to be. In fact, there are more genders than two according to people nowadays. I heard one thing that said there are 72 different genders defined. I don't know how you get that. And there is this onslaught to try to change the way we think about life fundamentally. Well, how do you deal with that? I mean, when you really read what's happening, see what's happening, it's depressing, discouraging. We can want to throw our hands up and just, "Lord, go

ahead and take us home. We want to leave this world." Well, that's a legitimate thing we should always want to do as a Christian. If you know Jesus Christ, heaven is better by far, but there is good news: we can make a difference in a world like this and the issue is the issue of authority, and as we try to speak the truth to people, we actually have a lot more going for us than we think. The Bible makes clear that all people have basic truth hardwired into them among things like maleness and femaleness, that there are only two genders. It is hardwired into them.

Mohler cited a study in Sweden where they are trying to, they take the children at a very young age and put them in government daycare and they are trying to redefine the way they think about gender. The little boys, they talk about these people who are social engineers basically, talking about the difficulty of making little boys not act like little boys. This is one and two-year-old toddlers. The boys would come in yelling and roughhousing and stuff, and the girls wanted to be held, and so what they started doing was making the boys play in the kitchen, the play kitchen and play with dolls, and they made the girls yell, "No!" real loud and just teach them to do this. They are trying to change the wiring and they talked about how hard it is.

The children are resistant to that, and it reminded Mohler as he was talking, of a study a few years back by atheists. The atheists were trying to do a study of, you know, what age is most resistant to the idea that there is no God? You might think it is older people who are brought up in the Christian church. Actually the most resistant age group to the idea that there is no God, the atheistic lie, are small children. The researcher said this, "Children," listen to this now, "Children appear to be preprogrammed to believe that the world cannot," this is by an atheist writing this, "Children appear to be preprogrammed to believe that the world cannot exist on its own terms and then some Creator had to be behind it." This is an atheist trying to reprogram the world acknowledging what Romans 1 says that we come hardwired knowing that there is a God, knowing that he is holy, knowing that we are sinners, knowing that we are male and we are female, and what happens then is the world system tries to convince you to believe something different.

Now in the midst of a world like that, that's confused like that, what is needed is authority. We don't need to acquiesce to the culture and just pretend that we're bringing just one more view. We can be very kind and gentle as we present it but we can be confident that we present the truth. When you speak the Gospel of Jesus Christ, you speak the truth that everyone needs to know and that everyone truly in their heart of hearts knows is true. You mention Jesus Christ, he is the one name that evokes reaction from everyone. Negative reaction. Why is that? Why does Mohammed not get the same negative reaction as Jesus? Why does Confucius or Buddha or any of the others? Because Jesus is the one true God and people in their heart of hearts know it.

So I want to go to a passage this morning, John 2, where we see this authority of Jesus Christ as related to the resurrection and the implications for this. We're going to look at John 2:13 to 22. The authority of Jesus Christ.

13 The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. 15 And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; 16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business." 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house will consume Me." 18 The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?" 19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" 21 But He was speaking of the temple of His body. 22 So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

Let's pray together.

Our Father, we thank you for your word. We pray now that your Spirit might minister to us through your word that you might show us the glory of your Son and show us our need of him. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

The authority of Jesus Christ. We're going to consider this under two main points and the first main point is going to have a number of, well, both main points will have some sub point, but the first main point is the illustration of his authority. The illustration of his authority. This circumstance at the beginning of Jesus' ministry is a powerful illustration of his authority; that is, that he claims to have the right to command obedience from every single human being on the face of the earth. This is what Jesus Christ claims as his authority and so this illustrates it here at the very beginning of his ministry. The Passover was at hand and Jesus enters into the temple and cleanses the temple in dramatic fashion. I want us to, first of all, set the stage here. It's before the Passover. Hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of Jews are converging on Jerusalem to worship the Lord at Passover. They are converging on the temple and Jesus goes up to the temple and he sees how they are preparing to sell the animals that need to be sacrificed on the Passover day and they are in the temple, and there are scores of oxen and sheep, doves, being brought in and out of the temple. There are money changers. People are coming from all over the Mediterranean world. Jews are coming from all over the Mediterranean world, traveling great distances, and so they have to offer a lamb, sometimes an ox, sometimes a dove as well, and so rather than have to bring your ox or your lamb from hundreds of miles walking, it makes sense and it was a convenience to be able to buy your Passover offering there in Jerusalem. So it seemed like a good idea but the problem was where they were doing the selling.

So that's the stage, but what does Jesus do? The first sub point, an illustration of his authority. There are four sub points. The first is an audacious act. An audacious act,

verses 15 and 16. He tramples on their arrangements. At first glance, this appears to be somewhat rude. I mean, if you step back from it and you forget that we know the story, many of us have read the story a number of times, it is actually quite astonishing. Jesus goes up to the temple, he makes a whip and he begins driving out all of the animals and he drives out all, including the men who were selling the sheep and the oxen. Then he pours out the coins of the money changers and overturns their tables. I mean, imagine somebody walking in here today and just starts tearing, knocking over the music stand, turns over the pulpit, upends these risers. That would be really something to see, but if that were happening, we would know, "What in the world is going on?" That's the kind of thing he's describing here.

In fact, the emphasis in the text, in the Greek the way that John describes it, is of one decisive act. He uses seven verbs of what Jesus did. He went up. He found those in the temple. He having made a scourge, he drove them out. He poured out the money. He overturned the tables. Then he said. Seven verbs, all aorist tense. Aorist tense is a past tense but particularly in Greek, aorist, as we talked about before, verb tense is not so much about the time of the action, past, present, future, as the kind of action, and the aorist tense speaks of a point in time. So you have Jesus, his seven verbs here surrounded by other verbs of other actors in this event, the money changers sitting, selling, they are in the present tense and Jesus is in the aorist tense. So here they are doing some stuff, just going about their business, and present tense means continuous action. They are continuing to sell. They are continuing to sit. They are continuing to change money. And Jesus decisively goes up, he makes a scourge, he drives them out, he pours out, he overturns, and then he speaks, and he speaks two commands. He commands them, "Take these things away and stop making my Father's house a place of business." It is a stunning action.

It was a miracle in itself. He didn't have the disciples organized. It wasn't like, "Guys, what we're going to do is we're going to go in here and we are going to lock arms and we are just going to start running toward people, yelling, and we're going to hit the ox on its rear end and all of you help me. I'm going to need you to do this." The part of the temple that he's in, the outer court, called the Court of the Gentiles, is a very large area, and the animal stalls are set up and cover a large area, but Jesus makes this scourge and one man with one whip, he accomplishes this miraculous feat. I can imagine that the people that were driven out were astonished at the force of what was happening themselves. I mean, it takes a lot of trouble to get sheep to go where you want them to go and oxen to go where you want them to go, and Jesus drives them all out, and then he goes and he turns over the tables and this seems to be at first glance a very rude inappropriate act.

That's what you would initially think as you look at it. It was an audacious act, but the second sub point is an astonishing claim. An astonishing claim. When he says, "Take these things away. Stop making my Father's house a place of business." The claim is that this house, this temple, though it is run by the Jewish leaders, the tribe of Levi, Jesus is making the claim that this is my Father's house, in other words, this is my house.

Imagine that if I came over to your house and I didn't like what was going on, I can't really think of an example of what you would be doing or whatever, but say I start throwing stuff around and turned over your table and I'm opening your refrigerator and throwing stuff on the floor. You would try to restrain me. Call the elders. Call the police. You would do something. "Ty has lost it. We don't know what's going on." It certainly inappropriate for me to go into your house and do that, but if I were to come home and there were some things going on in my house, again, it's hard to think of this because it really doesn't fit to my life, but say if my kids were rebellious, which they are not, but if they were and they were having a party, and they've got this loud crazy music going and they are drinking beer. Okay, this is happening, imagine that, and I go in and I say, "You guys, get out of my house! Every one of you, out of my house right now! Maggie, John, I want to talk to you. You guys, get out of my house!" And I start taking the beer cans and I throw them out in the front yard and I turn over whatever, the music thing they've got going and I kick it on out the front door and I say, "Guys, I'm sorry, but this is my house. It's not going to happen in my house." That's very different, isn't it? That's basically an appropriate, not sinful anger when I'm doing it and, of course, Jesus didn't have sinful anger but he had righteous anger and indignation and God is angry in a righteous way. The Psalms say God is angry with the unrighteous every day.

So Jesus is manifesting an appropriate anger. "This is my house and you have turned the house, this area of the Court of the Gentiles, this is the place people are drawing near to the presence of the living God. This is a place for prayer and contemplation and reflection and repentance and brokenness and what you've made it is a place with the bleating of sheep and the lowing of cattle." And can you imagine what would have been going on, probably dickering with the sellers and the buyers of the sheep, "I'll give you \$100 for that." "No, it's \$200." "I'll give you \$125." "No, not less than \$175." So you've got this dickering going on. It's a place of merchandise and you've got people getting the best of each other. This is supposed to be worship of the living God, drawing near to him.

And Jesus doesn't bother, he could have come in and said, "Listen guys, I've got to call a meeting. I need to talk to you chief priests. I'm the Messiah and we're going to change things." He didn't ask for any input. He took charge. And he's making the claim that he has authority to take charge of everyone's worship. That's a very important principle because there is a tendency among sinners to think that we can define how we want to worship. We can make the terms. People say things like, "My God would not do that." Well, you're probably right because your God, if you're saying for instance, "My God would not send sinners to hell who don't repent and believe the Gospel," well, you're right, your God wouldn't, but your God is not the God of the Bible. He is a God of your own making. You see, you're fashioning an image according to your own preferences and what Jesus is claiming to be able to do is to walk into your life and my life and to just knock over the idols. "If you're going to worship me, you're going to worship me according to my terms."

Now, that is an astonishing claim. He has the authority. So the first point was an audacious act, the second was an astonishing claim, and we are still under the illustration of his authority. So 1C would be the crucial question. Verse 18, "The Jews then said to

Him, 'What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?'" This is actually the right question. I think it's asked with the wrong attitude because they had actually already seen a sign, but it is the right question to be asking. As they begin to see this happening, they should have been asking, "Wait a minute, who is this?" And they might have if they had been studying their Bibles well, they would have thought back to Malachi 3:1-3, the last book of the Old Testament which says that, "I will send my servant ahead of him and he will prepare the way of the Lord, and then the Lord will suddenly come to his temple and he will purify the sons of Levi." This was one of the last messianic promises in the Old Testament. "You will know that the Messiah comes when he comes suddenly to the temple to purify it." This was being fulfilled right before their eyes. He was making a messianic claim. The Messiah, "I am the Messiah. I have come and this is my house because it's my Father's house, and it's my house and I'm cleaning house."

Now the reality is, that's true of every one of us. The Bible says we are all made in the image of God, we are all made to be worshipers of the living God. That's what you and I were created, that's what you and I were hardwired to do. That's why those little children, those little toddlers and those young children, believe in God. God made them to be worshipers, he made us to be worshipers, and he determines how we worship.

They asked the right question. What sign, what sign of authority? This word translated "sign of authority" means "a token or a symbol that authenticates." So a claim is made and the sign is the authenticating mark that you've been sent. So you make a claim that you are speaking for God, that God has sent you. This word is used in the Gospel of John, a very key word in the Gospel of John, the signs of Jesus. These are authenticating marks that show that he has been sent by God.

So they ask, "You claim to be sent by God, what is your sign of authority? How can we know that you really are speaking for God?" Now they want him to show them a sign right then. It's the nature of God never to acquiesce to that kind of demand. Jesus is asked for a sign, he never gives one then. The irony is he's giving them all around when they ask. A miracle, miracle, miracle; miracle, miracle. "Hey, show us a miracle." And he will then say, "No, I'm not going to show you a miracle," and he will talk about something else. But miracle, miracle, miracle, the same thing here. John reports that right after this, he goes out during the Passover and he performs many signs, many other miracles, so that many people are believing in him.

But they ask him for proof of his authority to come in and clean house and he gives them the most important sign of all. This is that which separates Jesus from every other prophet of the Old Testament, that which separates him from every other human being that has ever lived. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," verse 19. Now it's interesting, he uses the word "temple." It confused them, and he was being intentionally vague but he wasn't just being intentionally vague, he was being incredibly profound and incredibly clear to those who were willing to hear what was being said. He was basically saying, "I didn't just come to cleanse the temple, I have come to replace the temple. My

body is now the temple." The body of the man, Christ Jesus, he's saying right now at this moment in the plan of God for the ages, the plan of salvation, Jesus' body is the temple.

What is the temple? Well, it goes back to the Old Testament. First of all, the tent of meeting was the appointed place where man was to meet with God. When God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, took them to Mount Sinai, he gave them the law but he also gave them the tabernacle system, the offerings and the regulations for the tent of meeting. This was the place where God's glory dwelt in the temple. His glory cloud descended on the temple. It represented the place of his presence. It was the place where man, where sinful men meet with God, and it was at first a tent. So it was a portable temple. They would go from place to place, they would set up the tabernacle and the cloud of glory would descend on it, and the priests would work inside the tent, and the high priest only could one day a year go into the very holiest part of the tent where the glory of God truly dwelt the most clearly. And this was all to show us that it's not a small thing for sinners to be brought back into relationship with a holy God. Much must happen. Sin is much worse than we think it is. It has much, it has affected us in much more profound ways than we tend to think.

So the tent of meeting was the way that God revealed at first, and then David, King David wanted to build a temple for the Lord and God let his son Solomon built a permanent building, that now the tabernacle was replaced, the tent was replaced by the temple itself. And the clear teaching of the Old Testament was the only place in all the world that you can meet with God is that tabernacle first, and then now the temple. The only place. Read the book of 1 and 2 Kings and you see how God was so upset that they would try to offer sacrifices or meet with him on the high places. That's not appropriate. You meet with God at the temple. He was very angry with Jeroboam, the king of the north, who made two other alternative sites. Again, it made sense. Jeroboam becomes ruler of 10 of the tribes of Israel, the northern kingdom, and the two tribes in the south are under Rehoboam. Good names for twins there, Jeroboam and Rehoboam. Anyway, Rehoboam is in Jerusalem over the two tribes, and the temple is in Jerusalem under the southern kingdom. Jeroboam thinks, "I don't want my people going all the way down there to worship the Lord so I'll just make a couple other places." And he makes franchises of the temple, one at Bethel and one at Dan. The Lord calls this the sin of Jeroboam for which God hates the line of Jeroboam and eradicates it. And then again and again throughout the book of Kings we hear the refrain, "He walked in the sins of his father Jeroboam," because they were missing the point. There is one place that you meet with God.

Now, Jesus says when he says this, he is saying, the one place you meet with God is me, my body. This is the temple. Now in the truest sense, he's fully man, he's fully God, God is now dwelling in human flesh. In fact, John 1:14, John begins his Gospel with this beautiful word picture. After saying in the first few verses of chapter 1, he says, "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God. The Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." The Word meaning Christ Jesus. He existed eternally. He's God from eternity past. Fully God. John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory." The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, the word "dwelt"

in Greek could be translated more literally, "The Word tabernacled among us. The Word pitched his tent among us." John is already realizing and thinking through the implications. Jesus is the temple.

So he claims to be the temple. He's replacing the temple and he says, "Listen, I know these are audacious claims, astonishing claims, but the compelling proof is you destroy this temple and I will raise it up. You kill my body and on the third day I will raise it and that will be the absolute proof that I am who I say I am." So that the resurrection is tied to the authentication of Jesus Christ.

We see this in so many places. In fact, some of the verses that we've read earlier today, we mentioned Romans 1. When our elder Todd Guthrie was praying, he prayed another one of the verses where the resurrection is seen to be an authenticating mark. That is, that Jesus claims to have the authority to judge. Paul says, "He has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness," in Acts 17. He's preaching to Greeks at the Areopagus in Athens and he says, "Listen, in the past God has overlooked your ignorance but he has now appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness and he has given proof of that by raising him from the dead." Comparing the compelling proof that Jesus is going to judge the world in righteousness is he is risen.

So that leads us into now the implications of his authority. The implications of his authority. We considered the illustrations of his authority, the audacious act, the astonishing claim, the crucial question, the compelling proof being the resurrection, now the implications of his authority. We've touched on a couple of these but let's spell them out a little more clearly. There are four implications that I want us to consider this morning.

The first is: Jesus claims to have the authority over you and me, he has complete authority over our worship. Complete authority over it. His cleansing of the temple, his replacement of the temple, he now says that the one place that you can meet with God is me. His claims are absolutely exclusive. It is really impossible to read your Bible carefully and believe that Jesus did not make exclusive claims to absolute loyalty. It's astonishing that people will say things like, "You know, Jesus was a good moral teacher. Or he is one of the great spiritual teachers of all time." This is kind of a New Age thought. You know, let's put him right up there with Confucius and Buddha and whoever else you want to put up there. He's up there in the top seven or eight, Jesus. No, Jesus, if you're going to put Jesus up there, everybody else is going to be knocked down. And in fact, it's irrational to put him up there. C. S. Lewis makes this point in his book "Mere Christianity." He says Jesus made claims to be God, just like we see here acted out in this cleansing of the temple. He made repeated claims to be God and to demand loyalty as God. Now, Lewis goes on to say that a person who does that is either a liar, just doing it to try to have power over people, or they are a lunatic, they're crazy, or he is who he says he is. Lord, liar or lunatic. No other options. He can't be just a good moral teacher. That's irrational. But of course, we know he's Lord.

So he claims to have authority over the way that you worship. The only way that you can come to God Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father but by Me." The only way that you can go to God is through Jesus Christ. 1 Timothy 2:5, the Apostle Paul said, "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." So he determines our worship. He determines our worship by his word.

Secondly, the second implication, he doesn't just claim authority over our worship, he claims authority over every area of our lives. Every area of our lives and it is connected, again, to the resurrection, this authority. We see this in John particularly, the New Testament all over the place, but in John, we see it in John 10 where Jesus claims to be the Good Shepherd. "I am the Good Shepherd of the sheep." And as a shepherd, he claims authority to rule. You know, shepherd in the Old Testament was the word used for the king. He claims authority to run our lives. This is what we must accept when we come to Christ.

"I am the Good Shepherd." I mean, think about it, sheep don't make suggestions on where they're going, and if they do, they should not be heeded. The shepherd decides where you're going and sheep are to follow him, and he in fact points this out in the earlier part of this chapter. He talks about the sheep hear his voice, that is the shepherd, verse 3. "He calls his own sheep by name and he leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them and the sheep follow him because they know his voice." So Jesus says, "I am the shepherd. Those who will follow me are my sheep and I have the right to be their shepherd."

Why does he have the right? Well, a number of reasons but the one he uses here in verse 17, look at what he says in verse 17, "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative." And look at the keyword again, "I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." His resurrection confirms his authority as the Good Shepherd. He laid down his life authoritatively. Nobody took it away from him. It appeared that way but he gave himself freely. He could have called 10,000 angels to his defense at any moment. He laid down his life. He laid it down and then he took it up again.

This means that he is claiming the authority to run my life and your life, that the call to be a Christian, what does Jesus say? "Follow me. Become a disciple. Become a learner. Learn from me. Learn all that I command you and observe all that I command you." That's what a disciple does. He's the one who determines everything about what we should do. We should be looking to his word. This is what a Christian is called to do and he claims that authority over every single human being. This is why Paul in Acts 17 says that he commands everyone everywhere to repent. Paul said that in Athens to the philosophers, the people who loved to talk about what Aristotle and Plato had said. They loved to actually just argue philosophically. Paul says, "Listen, what God is saying to you is repent. That is, turn back from living your life for yourself and turn around and submit to the Lord Jesus Christ." God is calling everyone everywhere to repent and he's going to

judge the world in righteousness if you don't repent, and he has given proof of this by raising the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

He not only has authority over your life but he has authority to judge. We mentioned a moment ago Acts 17:30-31, he has furnished proof by raising him from the dead. He has authority to judge. This means that everyone who has ever lived will stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ and he will judge. How do we know that? We know it with certainty because he lives. The Bible teaches it, but his empty tomb testifies to us.

He has authority over our worship, authority over our lives, authority to judge, but he also has authority to save, and this is also proven by the resurrection. His wonderful authority to save sinners like you and me, to bring us into the presence of God, to take us from being enemies of God to being precious children, dear, treasured by God. Something that is really too wonderful to even imagine. When you see what the Bible says about how we were before we were saved, if you know Christ today, the Bible is clear what we were before we were saved. We were objects of wrath. We were at enmity with God. We had attitudes of hostility toward God. We did not want to follow God. We didn't want to submit to God and God had rightful hostility toward us. His was righteous and Jesus Christ has brought man and God together by giving himself at Calvary. He put himself in the place of sinners on the cross. He lived a perfect life and then died an atoning death. He experienced the wrath of God against our sin. That's why we call the Friday of the crucifixion, Good Friday. In one sense, it was the most horrible unjust day in all eternity. The precious holy Son of God is being murdered on the cross and yet it's good because God had willed that. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."

Jesus, this is how we know what love is, Jesus Christ laid down his life for us, and in dying for us, and bearing his wrath, the wrath of God, he finishes with our sin debt. He was treated as if he had committed every sin of everyone who would ever believe and God's righteous wrath was poured out upon him and he was separated from God. This is why he cried out. This is why he was so in anguish in Gethsemane as he thought about what it was like to be removed from the favor of God and to experience the curse of his Father. The separation that that entailed was the most terrifying reality that the man Christ Jesus could imagine, and so he said three times, he prayed, "Father, if there is any other way, let this cup pass from me, but not my will but thy will be done. Father, if there is any other way, let this cup pass from me, not my will but your will be done. Father, if there is any other way," and then he submitted and he experienced the wrath of God against your sin so that you would not have to experience the wrath of God.

And how do you know that his offering was acceptable? Because we still as believers, if you have repented and placed your faith in Christ, you find that you are still sinning on a daily basis, you still struggle. How do you know that your sins are forgiven? How do you know that you will be right with God? Hebrews 7:15. The way that we know that Jesus Christ is the faithful high priest who has brought sinners into the very presence of God, that he has been able to take us into the Holy of Holies so that now truly spiritually we are seated in the heavenly places in Christ, somehow spiritually as a believer, we are able to be in the presence of God even now, and that's why the Spirit can dwell in your hearts.

How do we know? Verse 16 of Hebrews 7. This is speaking about why Jesus is such a wonderful high priest. He says, he "has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life." The reason you can know Jesus' high priestly ministry is effective is because he lives.

He died on the cross. He was a sinless spotless lamb who died bearing the wrath of God against our sin. How do we know the offering was accepted? Because he rose. If he had ever sinned in any way, word, thought or deed, he would not have been able to rise from the dead. He was pure in himself and because of his purity, death could not hold him, as Peter says in his preaching at Pentecost. It was impossible for death to hold him because the sting of sin is death and if there is no sin, death has no sting.

And he saves, verse 25 of Hebrews 7, "Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him." Why? "Since He always lives to make intercession for them." He is able to save forever, to save to the uttermost. No matter where you are today. You may be a person who is experiencing the kind of confusion that we see so much in the world. You don't know which way is up. Jesus Christ is able to save you right where you are. He is able to save any of us. We are all sinners and we all were at some point in that kind of dilemma.

He is able to save because he lives. Yes, he wants to rule your life, he wants to determine how you worship, he wants to determine how you live, and if you don't respond to him, he will judge you. Make no mistake. In fact, it's true that every single human being, every being at one moment or another will acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord. You will do it now and receive him as your Savior, or you will do it as you go into hell because God is determined that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. But the glory of this glorious Savior is that he graciously offers himself for us. He calls you to come to him now. Today is the day of salvation and he is mighty to save.

That's what the resurrection of Jesus Christ means and this is what the world around us needs today, is to know that as Christians we have found the answer. The answer is a person, Jesus Christ, and we just need to invite people to keep looking at Jesus. We need to proclaim him confidently, joyfully, lovingly, winsomely, and we need to point people to him. Just keep looking at Jesus. Read the Bible. Read the Gospels and see if you don't see that he is who he says he is.

The resurrection of Christ. We serve a living Savior.

Let's go to him in prayer right now.

Our Father, we thank you for the reality of the salvation that you have made known in your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for his perfect life, that he was tempted in every way yet without sin. We thank you for his willingness to experience the suffering of this sin sick world so that he might save us. Lord Jesus, we thank you for your willingness to offer yourself at Calvary to experience the wrath of your Father in our place. We stand in awe of you. O God, you are so good. We thank you for giving

unmistakable proof that Jesus is your man, your King, your Savior, and that proof is the empty tomb. Father, we pray for everyone that is here today, that they would consider the claims of Christ and that they would place their trust in him, and we pray this in his marvelous name. Amen.