

**REDISCOVER JESUS, PART 73:
“THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS”
LUKE 19:47-20:18
Ps. Jeff Susila**

Personal Introduction

Hi everyone. If you don't know me, I'm Jeff - one of the pastors at HMCC of Jakarta. And it's my privilege to be preaching the Word of God for us today.

Sermon Series Introduction

We're currently in Part 73 of our sermon series called "Rediscover Jesus," where we're going through the Gospel of Luke together.

Before we get started, let me pray for us...

Introduction

Now, when I was in high school - when my friends and I were turning 16, the biggest thing during that time was... learning how to drive a car.

So during that time, the most common question my friends and I would be asking each other was: "Can you drive yet?"

Can you drive yet? Everyone wants to know because they'd like to get a ride with you!

Now... when, we ask one another whether or not we could drive, we actually mean 2 things:

- (1) Whether you actually know and have the ability to drive.
- And (2)... whether you're allowed to drive (so whether you have your driver's license).

Because you need both; both the power (or the ability) to drive and the authority to drive.

So this is where it's helpful for us to understand the difference between "power" and "authority." They're related, but a bit different.

- "Power" is more like the ability to do something.
- While "authority" is the authorization (or the right) to do something (and most likely, it would be given by an authorizing agency).

So in this case, you may have the ability to drive, but you won't be authorized to drive (or have the right to drive) without first getting a driver's license from the local government.

And then after you've received that authorization... Although you now have the right to drive, you still have to submit to the government's laws and regulations. You're to submit to them as the higher authority, right?

Because what happens if you break the government's laws and regulations while driving? You'll be in trouble.

<pause>

Similarly, in the passage we'll be looking at today, we'll see how the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day were trying to get rid of Jesus by questioning his authority... "By what authority do you do these things? Who is it that gave you the authority?"

This is actually a very very important question. Because the answer to this question would determine...

- Who Jesus is...
- What authority he has...
- And whether or not we should submit to him or not...

The One Thing

***Submit to Jesus for he is the Son of God
who acts in the authority of God.***

Scripture Introduction

If you have your Bibles with you, please turn to Luke 19:47-20:18.

For context, last week, we saw how Jesus finally arrived at the city of Jerusalem. And as he was entering the city, riding on a young donkey, his disciples were rejoicing and proclaiming that he's the promised King who they've been waiting for.

And as Jesus saw the city, he wept over it because he knew what would happen to those who'd reject him - that they'd be condemned.

He then went to the temple, where he then drove out those who sold (money-changers & merchants) in order to remind the people that the temple was supposed to be a house of prayer.

And that's where we're at now...

Scripture Reading

Let's read Luke 19:47-20:18:

⁴⁷ And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, ⁴⁸ but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.

²⁰ ¹ 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 ² and said to him, "Tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority." ³ He answered them, "I also will ask you a question. Now tell me, ⁴ was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?" ⁵ And they discussed it with one another, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why did you not believe him?' ⁶ But if we say, 'From man,' all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet." ⁷ So they answered that they did not know where it came from. ⁸ And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

⁹ And he began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. ¹⁰ When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹ And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹² And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. ¹³ Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.' ¹⁴ But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.' ¹⁵ And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶ He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others." When they heard this, they said, "Surely not!" ¹⁷ But he looked directly at them and said, "What then is this that is written:

"The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone’?

¹⁸ Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

This is God’s Word.

Overview

- I. The religious leaders question Jesus’ authority (19:47-20:2)
- II. Jesus answers with a question (20:3-8)
- III. Jesus answers with a parable (20:9-18)

Just a heads-up:

- We’ll go through the first point rather quickly to set up the scene.
- Then we’ll also go through the second point relatively quickly, and more of our time will be spent in the last point.

I. The religious leaders question Jesus’ authority (19:47-20:2)

Let’s take a look at chapter 19, verse 47.

After Jesus finally entered the city of Jerusalem, and after he drove away all of those who sold at the temple (including the money-changers and the merchants)... After all those events that just happened, Jesus returned to the temple each day, and he continued to teach daily at the temple.

- And each day, we know from verse 48 that the people were captivated by Jesus’ teachings; they must’ve been amazed by the Good News of the Kingdom of God that Jesus was preaching.

But... we’ll find out that others were captivated for an entirely different reason...

- Because, at this time, Jesus was also being watched by the chief priests (who were *high-ranking* temple priests), who perhaps saw what Jesus just did at their temple, driving away the money-changers and merchants!
- And Jesus was also being watched by the scribes (who were lawyers; masters of the law).
- And he’s being watched by the principal men of the people (who were most likely leaders in politics and business). Perhaps some of them were even involved in organizing the business at the temple.

So, at this time, these men have been observing Jesus very closely. And why is that? Because *his* authority was challenging *their* authority!

- Because throughout the past 3 years, Jesus’ reputation and influence has continued to increase and increase, as he’s been doing his ministry. And more and more people were now following him.
- And it climaxed recently as a large number of his disciples were rejoicing (laying their cloaks and palm branches on the ground), as they celebrated and welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem as their promised King.

So now, in order to preserve their own authority, look again at verse 47... Some of the religious leaders along with the people’s leaders were seeking to destroy Jesus; to kill the one who’s been threatening *their* authority.

- They’ve had enough of Jesus!

Look at verse 48. But... They didn’t find anything they could do! They couldn’t find a way to kill Jesus at this time because of all the people in the city who were captivated by him, and hanging on his words.

This was a huge problem for the leaders. So I imagine... that they started to discuss different strategies on how they can destroy Jesus. And it seems that they realized that if they wanted to kill Jesus, they’d first have to turn the people against him...

So let’s see what they’ll do...

Look at chapter 20, verses 1-2.

During one of the days that Jesus was teaching at the temple and preaching the Gospel, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came up to him.

And they publicly said to Jesus, "Tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority."

- In other words, what authority (what *right*) do you have to drive away the money-changers and merchants at the temple, and who *authorized* you to teach at the temple? ("Because it wasn't from us!")

<pause>

Now, the elders were distinguished members of the Sanhedrin, which is the Jewish supreme council that has religious, civil, and criminal jurisdiction over the people. All this to say... These were really powerful (and influential) religious men with official authority! So the people who were after Jesus were no longer just the Pharisees of the local towns' synagogues, but these are the very very top leaders now!

And to these top religious leaders, Jesus had no "official" authority to do the things that he's doing at the temple (because he doesn't belong to a specific sect - he had no "official" priestly authority, no "official" scribal authority, he was not a Pharisee or a Sadducee, and was not a member of the Sanhedrin).

So by asking this question, they were trying to trap Jesus, and they're trying to turn the people against him by having them question his authority...

- Because if Jesus says that his authority is from anyone or anything else other than God, then that would destroy his credibility.
 - The leaders would ask the people, "then why are you listening to him?!"
- But... if Jesus says that his authority is from God... if he states publicly that he is the Son of God and the promised King... then they're hoping that either some of the people would then accuse him of blasphemy, or... this will get the Romans' attention because Jesus' declaration of Kingship would be a threat to the Roman government.

So no matter what Jesus says, they're thinking that it's gonna be a win-win situation... They got Jesus where they wanted him.

So how will Jesus answer their question?

II. Jesus answers with a question (20:3-8)

Let's look at verse 3.

Jesus answered them, "I also will ask you a question."

- Uh-oh. This was not part of the plan. This was not what the religious leaders expected, and it's not what they had in mind.

"Now tell me, was the baptism of John from Heaven or from man?"

- In other words, was John the Baptist's baptism, and his ministry... authorized by God (by a Heavenly authorizing agency) or by man (by a worldly authorizing agency)?
 - Because John the Baptist also did not have "official" authority from the religious leaders to baptize people. Yet he was baptizing disciples who repent of their sins and turn to God, and he pointed them to the coming of the Messiah / the promised King, whom he declares is Jesus.

- When John saw Jesus, he proclaimed, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29).
 - And then John said, “and I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God” (John 1:34).
 - So what John proclaims publicly is that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of God who acts in the authority of God.

So Jesus is asking this question because the religious leaders’ answer to this question would also be the answer to their question.

<pause>

But here’s the thing... The religious leaders did *not* believe that John the Baptist’s authority was from God, and they didn’t believe that Jesus is who John says that he is.

- In fact, when John was baptizing disciples, the Pharisees sent their people to question John. They asked, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” (John 1:24-25).
- And they rejected his message, and so the Pharisees and the lawyers were not baptized by him (Luke 7:30).

So they actually *knew* their answer to Jesus’ question right away. They *didn’t* believe that John’s authority was from God.

But before answering Jesus, they discussed among themselves... And they carefully thought about it first...

Look at verse 5.

- If they said that John’s authority was from Heaven (from God), then they think that Jesus would then ask them, “then why didn’t you believe him?”
 - Why didn’t you get baptized? And why don’t you believe in what he proclaimed about me?
 - Now, this would publicly destroy the leaders’ reputation and authority (which were the very things they’re trying to protect).
- But if they said that John’s authority was from man, then they think that the people would stone them to death (for heresy) because the people believe that John was a prophet.

They saw it as a lose-lose situation. So they just said that they did not know where John’s authority came from.

Now look at verse 8:

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.’”

Now, Jesus is not saying that he doesn’t know where his authority comes from. But he’s just not answering their question in one of the ways that the religious leaders wanted him to.

- He did not fall for their trap.

But through Jesus’ question, he actually gave an answer...

- Because he points the people to John the Baptist. Jesus is directing the people to remember what John already proclaimed about him; that he is indeed the Son of God. And therefore, he acts in the authority of God. That’s the answer to the question.

<pause>

Now, before we continue, I just want to make it clear that it's definitely ok to ask questions. So if by the end of our service, you're still unsure and still trying to figure out who Jesus is and what authority he has, then you should ask those important questions.

- I'd encourage you to talk to me or to anyone around you; we'd love to talk to you.

But... keep in mind that what's also important is how we approach these questions. We should seek the answers to our questions *genuinely* (with an open heart and an open mind), so that we may get to the truth.

Not like these religious leaders who already made up their minds ahead of time, and actually didn't care about what Jesus said.

- They just wanted to trap him.

Because for the religious leaders, what they actually cared about was *not* the truth, but what they cared about was the preservation of their own power and authority.

<pause>

Now, let's take a step back and ask ourselves: How about us? What power and authority do we have?

- If we think about it, we all have some sort of power and authority over something... Because authority is integrated into all aspects of our lives...
 - Even when we're children, our parents give us some sort of authority to take care of our belongings.
 - And as we grow up, perhaps we become a bit more independent, and we now have the authority to manage our own finances.
 - And as we get a job - as employees, we have the authority (from our employer) to do the work that we're doing.
 - Perhaps as a team leader or manager, some of us have the authority to lead our team members.
 - And for those of you who are parents, you have the authority to care for and to discipline your children.
 - And so forth...

We all have some sort of authority... and perhaps the amount of authority we have continues to increase over time... and - to a certain degree - we'd like to maintain that authority.

- We may not go as far as the religious leaders (and try to kill someone in order to maintain our authority), but let's not quickly dismiss what these leaders were doing here.

In fact, as sinners, our natural tendency is to desire absolute authority over everything in our lives; to be completely in control, and to not lose control over the things that we have authority over.

- Because, just like them, we also don't want to lose the authority that we have over our finances, belongings, work, or anything else.

And it makes us nervous when our authority is threatened. So in that sense, maybe we're not too different from these religious leaders as we'd like to be...

Let's keep that in mind, as we see what happens next...

III. Jesus answers with a parable (20:9-18)

Look at verse 20.

After answering the religious leaders' question with another question, Jesus now gives a "part 2" to his answer through a parable (so through a fictional story - in order to make a particular point).

And in Jesus' parable, we're introduced to a man - an owner of a vineyard - who leased his vineyard to tenant farmers, and then he went to another country for a long while.

- Now, this sort of tenant farming arrangement was a common practice during that time (so this situation would've been quite familiar for Jesus' audience).

And what would also be familiar to Jesus' Jewish audience, is what the owner and the vineyard symbolize.

- Because Jesus' parable would remind them of Scripture (specifically what's written in Isaiah), which refers to the people of Israel as the Lord's vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-7).
- So to them, it would've been somewhat obvious that the owner of the vineyard... represents God.
- And the vineyard... represents Israel.
 - And then God entrusted Israel - His people - to "tenant farmers" (who represent the Jewish religious leaders); those who were supposed to protect and take care of the people of Israel, and who were supposed to produce fruit for God by leading more and more people to repent and turn to Him.
 - That's what they're supposed to do. But what did they end up doing instead?

Let's go back to the parable... After some time had passed, it was finally time for the grape harvest. So the owner sent a servant to the tenants in order to collect his share of the harvest (so the owner expected fruit).

- Again, this was a common arrangement during that time. So what's happening so far wouldn't be a surprise to the people listening.
- But what's shocking is how the tenant farmers treated the owner's servant when he came to collect the owner's share of the grape harvest!
 - They *beat* the servant, and then sent him away empty-handed!

Can you imagine operating a "kosan" (or a boarding house). And then sending your worker to collect the rent from your tenants. Only for your tenants to beat up the one you've sent, and then send him away empty-handed? What would you do in that situation as the owner? Wouldn't you punish and kick out the tenants!?

But what did this vineyard owner do? What he does is even more shocking than what the tenants did.

- He didn't punish them (at least not yet), and he sent a second servant...
 - But unfortunately, this servant was also beaten, treated shamefully / insulted, and then sent away empty-handed.
- And even then, the owner sent a third servant...
 - Whom they also wounded and hurt, and then chased away.

The servants here represent the prophets. God's messengers who came to deliver a message to his tenants (the Prophets came in the authority and command of God).

But what happened to God's prophets? Many were not listened to, but were instead beaten, and even killed.

- John the Baptist was one of these prophets.
- But the religious leaders did not believe that his authority was from God, and so they did not listen to his message, and they ridiculed him.

<pause>

Now, those listening to Jesus' parable at the time may be thinking, "Now, after 3 servants have been beaten, surely... the owner will now punish the tenants."

But even then, look at verse 13. The owner still did not yet punish his tenants, but chose to send his beloved son to them (in the hope that they'd finally show him respect).

- But what did the tenants do to his son? They threw him out of the vineyard and didn't just drive him away, but *killed* him.

- And why did they do that? Look at verse 14. They *killed* the owner's son in order to take over the vineyard all for themselves.
 - After all, at this point, they haven't seen the owner in a "long while." They think he's far away. And they've already beaten three servants and they seem to have gotten away with it. So surely they'd get away with this as well.. They're probably thinking... We now have authority over the vineyard ourselves!

<pause>

The owner's beloved son here represents Jesus Christ, the Son of God

- Yet, just like the tenant farmers in the parable, the religious leaders desired to kill Jesus so that they could keep whatever authority they had so that they could remain in control and rule over the people for their own benefits.

<pause>

Here we see man's sinful tendency to use their authority for their own benefits, even at the expense of others' wellbeing.

And perhaps this is why talking about authority can make us a bit uneasy, and some of us here may even feel hesitant in submitting to authority.

- Because maybe some of us here have personally experienced deep hurt from others who have mishandled or have abused their authority.
- Maybe it was our parents, other family members, friends, employers, government officials, or other people who have hurt us in the past from the way they misused their authority.

What we can see here (from these tenant farmers) is that our authority can be misused in such a way that it's so harmful... and that's because bad authority is self-focused (not others focused) and it's not accountable.

- (1) Bad authority is self-focused - those who practice bad authority focus on preserving their own authority without much thought of others... It can lead them to hurting others.
 - Imagine a manager who takes credit for all of their employees' good ideas, but then blames them whenever there's a bad idea. They just want to look good in front of their boss.
 - It harms others for the sake of their own benefit. That's bad use of authority.
- (2) Bad authority is also not accountable.
 - It doesn't submit to anyone - Imagine that same manager starts to do whatever they want just because they can (perhaps telling his employees to do what's not in their job scope; telling them to do their house chores or clean their cars); basically having no self-control and not being wise in knowing when to refrain from using their power.
 - Just like the tenant farmers who abused the authority that's been given to them.

Again, perhaps we've been abused before by others' use of authority. Or perhaps some of us here are actually the ones guilty of using our authority in a harmful manner (whether we know it or not).

Now what bad authority does is that it can lead us, and lead others, to be hesitant in submitting to good authority.

- Because authority itself is actually not inherently bad, it's good...

<pause>

So let's observe how God uses His authority... Let's take a look at how the owner uses his authority...

Basically, it's the complete opposite of the tenant-farmers. Because unlike them, the owner is not self-focused, but is others-focused.

- That's the big difference here: good authority is others-focused - And we see that the owner shares his authority with others for their benefit.
 - Allowing the tenants to use what belongs to him.
 - And trusting his servants to do his work.

- And he's also slow to exercise his authority in order to punish those under his authority. He's patient with those who've wronged him.

Brothers and sisters, this is what our God is like. He uses his authority for the good of others.

And what makes this even more shocking is that there's actually no one higher than Him! He is the highest, ultimate, absolute authority.

- Thus, He's only accountable to Himself. He's not accountable to anyone else!
- So He has the right to do whatever He deems fit.
- Yet, He chose to use His authority for the good of others.
- And He uses it with much care and patience.
 - He's slow to punish those who have sinned against Him. He patiently sends His messengers so that He may be known. Even though he keeps getting rejected...

<pause>

Now, we know that for those who reject and disobey a higher authority, that what they deserve is punishment.

- That if you break the law (assuming that the law is just), then you'll be judged for what you've done wrong.

Similarly, we all have also disobeyed a higher authority. In fact, we've disobeyed the highest authority. We've all fallen short of God's perfect standard of righteousness.

- As tenants in God's world, we've used our authority for our own benefits; we've mistreated others (either knowingly or unknowingly).

And for breaking God's perfect Laws, what we deserve is punishment. And the punishment that God has warned us about is that we'll be punished eternally in Hell. That's the just punishment for disobeying the highest authority.

Yet, God is patient. He's merciful and gracious.

He chose to wait. And not only that but He sent His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to die on the cross for our sake.

- Can you imagine that? We're "like" the sinful tenants, and yet God sent His Son to die for such sinners as us, so that we may be saved!
- It's unimaginable! But that's what Jesus did for us!
 - That those who believe in Jesus - who believe in his authority as the Son of God; as Lord and Savior - will not be punished, but will instead be rewarded with eternal life.
- It's not what we deserve! But that's why it's called grace. God gave us what we don't deserve.
 - And we, who were once like the sinful tenants, are not only forgiven but are now adopted into God's family as His children; now as heirs to the Kingdom of God, who will be with our Heavenly Father in Heaven... forever.

<pause>

And through this parable Jesus, again, answers the religious leaders' question a second time; that **he is indeed the Son of God!**

- If it wasn't clear before, Jesus is now making it even clearer. He's basically proclaiming it himself now...
- **He is the beloved Son of God who acts in the authority of God.**
 - He's not like the other messengers or prophets whom God has sent in the past.
 - He is the Son of God.
 - And the Son of God is God the Son - he is God himself!
 - He came from Heaven to Earth, to Jerusalem - fully man and fully God.

Thus, his authority is above all authorities (above anything or anyone else in Heaven and Earth)!

- And it includes authority over all diseases.

- Remember how Jesus healed many people during his ministry on Earth - from bleeding, leprosy, blindness.
- And it includes authority even over death itself.
 - Remember how Jesus commanded Jairus' daughter and Lazarus to get back up! As he resurrected them from the dead.
- It includes authority over all the Earth - even over creation itself - as we've seen Jesus calm a storm. Which caused his disciples to ask, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?" (Luke 8:22-25)
- And it includes authority... even beyond the Earth... over demons and evil spirits - that even a legion of demonic spirits have to listen to Jesus' command, as he easily casted out demons from those who were possessed (Luke 8:26-39).

So as the Son of God who acts in the authority of God, Jesus has the highest of authorities.

- **So the proper response for those of us who have lesser authority would be to submit to him (to listen to him and to obey his commands).**
 - Generally speaking, we understand that a lesser authority should submit to a higher authority.

So not only would it be right and appropriate for us to submit to him.

But we can do so willingly and joyfully, knowing that our God is good and patient, and cares for us. His authority is completely good.

- And those who submit to him - who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior - will be saved.

<pause>

But now... what happens to those who continue to reject the Son?

Look at verse 15. Jesus asked them, "what then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those tenants."

Finally, the owner will exercise his authority (his right) as the true owner of the vineyard. He'll rightfully punish those who rejected him and his son, and who did not submit to his authority.

But interestingly, Jesus doesn't stop there with the tenants' destruction. He continues and says, "and [then... he'll] give the vineyard to others."

Some commentators believe that the "others" here represent the Gentiles (or the "non-Jews"), and other commentators believe that the "others" here may also refer to the apostles, who Jesus would later entrust his people to.

- We can get a clearer picture of what is meant by "others" by reading the parallel account in Matthew, where Jesus further explains that "the kingdom of God will be taken away from [them] and given to a people producing its fruits" (Matt. 21:43).
- To a people producing its fruits...
 - To other tenants who would submit to his authority, and give him his share of the harvest in their seasons!
 - Which could be in reference to both the apostles and also the Gentiles (Because Jesus' new tenants - his new people - will consist of both Jews and Gentiles; those who will submit to him and will produce fruit for God's Kingdom).

Now, the religious leaders... they seem to understand what Jesus meant, and they said, "Surely not!"

- They couldn't believe it.
- They couldn't believe that something like that would ever happen; that their authority would be taken away from them and given to someone else.

<pause>

Look at verse 17. Jesus then looks directly at them in the eyes. He wants to make sure that they knew that he was speaking to them.

“What then is this that is written:

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone”?

Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

When building a structure (such as a house) using stones (or bricks), the cornerstone would be the first stone (or brick) that would be set in the corner.

- It serves 2 main purposes:
 - (1) It serves as a reference point to how the other stones should be placed.
 - Without it, a wall may slant, and not remain straight during the construction.
 - (2) It serves as a strong foundation for the other stones, and for the entire structure.

What Jesus is saying is this: that he is the stone that the builders rejected. He is the one whose authority the religious leaders have rejected.

And even though they'll successfully kill him, Jesus will be given a place of honor...

And he (as the cornerstone) will become the foundation of his rebuilt people (the church).

And those who reject him as the Son of God (as the cornerstone), will be crushed and destroyed.

<pause>

And we know that his new people (the church) will have his delegated authority as the “new tenant farmers” who will produce fruit for God (Matt. 28:16-20).

Jesus, before his ascension, said this to his disciples...

Matthew 28:18b-20 (ESV)

“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.”

Jesus gave his new tenants, his new people, a command to make disciples of all nations; to teach others what he has commanded us. So that more and more people will put their faith in Christ, and not be crushed and destroyed, but be saved.

Jesus has delegated his authority to us. We now have his delegated authority as followers of Christ.

So as his people, how can we submit to his authority? By obeying his commands (including this Great Commission).

And we're to use this authority that he's entrusted to us not for our selfish gain, not for our own benefit, but for the benefit of the Kingdom of God - we're to use our God-given authority for others' benefit in order to point them to Christ.

To bring others from around our city and around the world... to know Jesus... so that they may be a part of his family...

<pause>

So let's ask ourselves: how have you used your authority?

- Has it been to protect your own reputation? Or has it been used to help others grow, pointing them to Christ?

Because, as Christians, how we steward and exercise our God-given authority will either help others turn to God... or push them away from God; it will either help others' understand God's good authority... or confuse them as they observe you practice bad authority.

- So at work, how do you handle your authority?
 - If you're a leader or a manager, how are you using your authority to point others to Christ (including both your Christian and non-Christian co-workers)?
 - When your team members mess up, you actually have the authority to correct them. But how will you go about it? Will you make them feel bad, bringing them down? Or will you encourage them to help them improve and grow? Showing that you truly care for them (and pointing them to the God who is good and who does care).

- And in the family home...
 - Parents, what are you teaching your children about God's authority by the way you discipline them? And by the way they see you submit to higher authority?
 - Teens, are you honoring your parents' authority? Are you submitting to them (as God has commanded you)?

As part of Christ's body - his church - how are we building up one another and pointing others to Christ?

These are just some examples, and it's definitely not an exhaustive list of all the things that we could do.

- One practical thing that we can do is to take some time to intentionally list down the different forms of authority that God has entrusted to us in the various areas of our lives.
 - Including: work, family, church, and so forth...
 - And perhaps you can take some time tonight or this week to pray through some of those things to see how you can be faithful in stewarding the authority that God has delegated to you.

All this to say... we exercise our authority hundreds of times per day as we make daily decisions as we interact with others...

<pause>

So going back to the religious leaders' question to Jesus... "By what authority do you do these things? Who is it that gave you the authority?"

We mentioned earlier that this is actually a very very important question. Because the answer to this question would determine...

- Who Jesus is...
- What authority he has...
- And whether or not we should submit to him or not...

And we learned how Jesus is the Son of God who acts in the authority of God.

So as we look to the authority of Jesus, and as we submit to him, let's be reminded of our Lord and Savior... who used his authority for the sake of others - for our sake - so that we may be saved.

- And may we willingly submit to Jesus Christ as our highest authority, and allow his work on the cross to inspire us to continue to build up his church (with him as the cornerstone) so that more and more people will not be crushed, but be saved.

The One Thing

***Submit to Jesus for he is the Son of God
who acts in the authority of God.***

Let's pray.