

Christ Community Covenant Church
Who's in Charge? "He has put all things under his feet . . ."
Pastor Dave Scherrer - April 14, 2013

I have had some interesting conversations this week. People came up to me after the service last week and began offering their take on the problem with authority in our world today. I had some who wanted to talk about what happens when people have authority for years and years and get corrupted by their place of power. Like Lord Acton said they reminded me, "Power tends to corrupt. Absolute Power corrupts absolutely." Others wanted to know if we were going to talk about what happens when the government makes laws that are counter to God's. Whose authority do we follow? Some wanted to know if all authority is established by God and if it is, why so much of it is evil and unjust.

I also had a conversation about how the issue of authority is a function of our will - we are going to see that today.

We saw last week that authority is either given or earned. It is bestowed on some by their culture by virtue of their position and perhaps by the law. This is the authority of a policeman or a governor of a state. Then there is the authority that is earned, like a looked up to musician or gymnast or professor of literature. They have earned their voice by their discipline in their field.

We are going to look this morning a bit longer at Christ's power and authority. We need to understand how complete and how majestic is the authority of Christ.

Christ's Power and Authority

In the case of Christ, His authority was both given to Him and earned by Him; *given* to Him by His Father in Heaven and He also *earned* His authority to sit at the right hand of the Father (like the cover of the bulletin) we are told by His obedience.

Paul wrote to the church hoping that we would come to understand what a wonderful thing this authority of Christ is. Let's look at that passage:

Ephesians 1:15-23

For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, **and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.**

I love this prayer of Paul. It is my prayer for 4Cs. That we would all know *"the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe."*

A couple weeks ago at Easter we remembered the love of the cross and the power of the resurrection. This verse is telling us that this power that is at work in us **is the same power as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead.** You have in you resurrection power, just like Christ!

So now you are saying to yourself, as sometimes I find myself saying, "Why don't I have the evidence of that power? Why is my life so ordinary and so weak if I have this power and authority?"

Well I have a couple of answers for you this morning. To unravel this mystery let's look first at what was the secret of Christ. I think it was simple.

Jesus did only what he saw and heard from the Father

John 5:19, 30

Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does."

"But I do nothing without consulting the Father. I do just as I am told. My judgment is absolutely just because it is according to the will of God, who sent me. It's not merely my own."

John 8:26, 28

"I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world."

So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me."

John 12:49-50

For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken.⁵⁰ I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

John 14:29-3

²⁹ I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.³⁰ I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me,³¹ but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

It kind of hurts my head to think that even the Devil was doing the bidding of God. The prince of this world was coming to orchestrate that Jesus was betrayed and murdered but that was all arranged by the Godhead so that the world would know that Jesus loves and obeys the Father even in the face of the most terrible of costs.

You see submitting to authority is an act of the will.

Submitting to authority as an act of the will

It needs to be understood that way. You always have a choice. It is easy to get this backwards: authority is established by submission. Let's see if this makes sense. You have authority over my life because I give it to you. If I tell my small child to go stand in the corner and they do, then I have authority because they submitted. If they pout and whine and throw a tantrum and I say "Never mind" then the child has authority, because I submit. In the first century, the Christians were told by the Romans that they could continue in their faith and not be killed if they simply offered a sacrifice to Caesar and stated "Caesar is Lord." They simply had to submit to the authority of Rome. Many did not and they were killed. I submit that even they, though Rome had the power to have these Christians executed, never fell under the authority of Rome. They had a choice. And every choice has a cost. To yield to the power of Rome had a cost, not to yield had a cost.

Imagine if you and I had it in mind as Jesus had it in mind to only do the will of the Father. Every word, every act would come under the direction and influence of the Father. Imagine that we decide when we get up in the morning - even *before* we get up in the morning - that we will in all ways, submit to the will of the Father. We relinquish our will and do and say only the things that the Father would approve of. Seem far-fetched? I don't know, maybe it makes sense to yield to the Father.

Hebrews 12:9

⁹ *Besides this*, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live?

The faithful disciple Peter seems to think we should speak only the words of the Father and only do the deeds of the Father:

1 Peter 4:11

If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Do you see that scripture is just dripping with the idea of submission and authority? This verse says in word and action we are to do things to the glory of the Father through the power of the Father. Here again is that resurrection power that we have been referring to. The authority of Christ was established by his yielding to the Father. And now he is passing on His authority to us by having us yield to the resurrection power that works within us to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus gives his authority to us

This is a mysterious thing to have the authority of Christ. But it has been the evidence of the disciples since the beginning. Christ has been anointing us with power and sending out His disciples for thousands of years! Remember this story?

Luke 9:1-2

When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, ² and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

When you read that story, you say to yourself, "I wish I had power like that. I wish I could have this kind of authority." I am here telling you this morning that you have the choice to submit to the authority of God and to share His power by simply choosing to say and do only those things that are the will of the Father.

John 14:12-14

Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Choose to do only the will of the Father

We have been guilty of a two-fold sin:

- 1. Of failing to yield to the Father and,**
- 2. Giving away our authority and responsibilities to false and failing authorities**

You see this power is released in us when we give up our agenda and will for our lives -when we cease to be the God of our lives. You and I do not have the full use of the resurrection power of God because we have failed to choose every day to do the will of the Father and only the will of the Father.

Paul says this in the churches of his day. He had to get after them for failing to yield to God.

1 Corinthians 4:18-21

¹⁸ Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. ¹⁹ But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power

they have. ²⁰ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. ²¹ What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in love and with a gentle spirit?

Apparently Paul is coming to visit and he is not intending to take prisoners. He is about to say "I'm tired of your excuses and I'm tired of you listening to these false voices and authorities."

Vs 20: For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

There is a second sin that we engage in that bleaches the power and authority of God out of us. Not only do we fail to yield to God, but we then give authority and submit to false powers and failing powers. We listen to the lies of politics and marketing, of mortgage companies and educators, psychologists and various power brokers of all kinds.

It seems obvious to us if we think about it. We cannot know the will of the Father if we do not listen to Him. If we do not find the time to be alone with God to seek His will. When Jesus sent out the twelve if you read on you will see how simply they were outfitted. They did not have all kinds of supplies - they simply relied on God to stir the hearts of the people to take care of them. Jesus lived this way. Jesus said, "The birds have nests, the fox have holes but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." The only thing of value he had was a seamless robe that would be taken from him at his crucifixion.

We don't yield because we don't think of it. We are too busy with our stuff and being in control of our lives that we don't have power. We have committed the double sin of failing to yield to the Father and then foolishly yielding to people and things that do not matter one whit. My best advice to get going in this life of power - the one thing that you can do this week is to start letting the resurrection power have its fruit in you . . .

One thing this week: Simplify, Simplify, Simplify

Colossians 2:13-15

Do you remember this account?

In answer to a centurion's earnest request to heal his slave who was desperately sick, Jesus was on his way to the house of the Roman centurion who was in command of the garrison at Capernaum. When the centurion heard that Jesus was coming in person he was amazed, and at once sent messengers to intercept him, protesting that he was not worthy that Christ should go to such trouble. Surely all he had to do was to speak the word, without coming in person, and the sick slave would be healed; for, he said, "I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it" (Matt. 8:9). What he meant was that if he, a junior non-commissioned officer in the Roman army, could have things done by word of command, without going in person, surely Jesus, the great prophet of Israel, could do likewise.

"A man under authority." At first that seems an odd way of putting it. Why did he not say a man with authority, or a man invested with authority? But this is what he said: "a man under authority." When you stop to think of it, there was sound sense in the way he put it. Above the centurion was the senior centurion, and above the senior centurion, the sixty centurions of the Roman legion. Above the sixty centurions were the six tribunes, and above the six tribunes the two consuls, and—in the imperial system—above the two consuls, the emperor himself. It was because he stood – although the last and the lowest – in this long line of delegated authority that the Roman centurion was able to give orders and have them obeyed. He could give orders because he received orders. He had authority because he was under authority.

Choose to do only the will of the Father. Simplify your life by one thing this week that will release you from being enslaved to the will of the world. Submit to the Father and find the resurrection power that has been given to you.

Benediction:

In John 13 (v3-8), Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God, so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Richard Halverson, the Chaplain to the Senate, said - "Evangelicals seem to want power only so they can accomplish their agenda, which is not a Kingdom of God agenda. They want a spiritual revival so they can be more materialistic... But the surest way for this to be a better world is for people to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. The model for Christian leadership in America today is not the entrepreneur, not the CEO but a complexly new kind of authority - it is the power of the suffering servant, Jesus Christ."