



Mark 11:27-33 | Hear God's Authoritative Word and Son

Written & Preached by John Cole

INTRODUCTION

I haven't had an illustration with our dog Bentley in a while, so I figured we are due one.

One thing funny about dogs is that they sense and identify the "Alpha male" of the household and respond with more obedience accordingly.

Bentley has grown in his training, but the other day, he needed a bath and didn't want one.

And he was acting like a baby!

Our son, David, had his turn to give him a bath, but Bentley was not having it.

So, the "Alpha Male" had to come to the rescue and join in on the party.

We're like that too... it's not just what is said but who said it that matters!

And that can be very right.

Unless you determine wrongly about who is in authority... like these religious rulers in our text with Jesus.

Jesus had just rocked their world with His confrontation in the Gentile Courtyard of the Temple.

And they were not happy.

You can get that sermon on our website or app.

But today, we are going to listen in to their confrontation against Jesus and see what we can learn about God's authoritative Word and Son.

What sort of authority does Jesus have?

If He lived two thousand years ago, why should he still have authority in our lives today?

And how are we to interpret His authority? Two thousand years is a long time!

Surely, we are just supposed to take Jesus and His teachings as soft recommendations, general ideas to alter to our liking and context, right?

Wrong. Jesus's authority isn't like that because He is not just a historic person. Jesus is the living God Who came to be among us in history and Who will return as promised.

Follower of Christ or not, Jesus is your authority, and you will give account to Him one day.

So, let's see what He has to say when confronted about His authority...

JESUS WALKS IN HIS TEMPLE. (v27)

Mark 11:27

And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders,

We won't spend much time here, but I don't want to pass over this too quickly either.

Please notice with me how:

- The disciples are *walking with* Jesus in the temple.
- Members of the apostate Sanhedrin of Israel are *confronting* Jesus in the temple.

One group is in fellowship with the LORD in His temple.

The other group is fighting the LORD in His temple.

One group hears. The other refuses.

One learns truth. The other speaks and believes lies.

Last Sunday we saw how the Sanhedrin was confronted by Jesus. Today, we see Jesus being confronted by the Sanhedrin.

The later group is obviously not responding to Jesus with repentance and faith!

The whole scene makes me think of God walking in the Garden of Eden—the first temple.

[Genesis 3:8](#) “And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.”

Though at first, Adam and Eve tried to hide, eventually they were confronted both with God’s judgment and God’s promise to save through the promised Deliverer.

They repented and hoped in God’s promised salvation.

But the Serpent... and their son Cain... and all who followed those two, responded to the Word of the LORD in a way more similar to the Sanhedrin: *prideful unbelief*.

One thing we can be sure of all who follow their way: they won’t be found *walking with the LORD in the temple*.

But all who repent and follow God by faith in His Word are restored into His presence.

Like the disciples, they walk with the LORD in His temple.

God becomes their greatest pleasure and delight.

And they live for the purpose for which they were created.

Know you are created to delight in God’s presence.

Q: What substitutes for God’s presence have you sought out and found to be unsatisfying?

Living outside God’s presence and in rebellion to His purpose for us is a great tragedy and sin.

Are you walking with the LORD today?

If you are unsure about that, you are in the right place to learn how to be restored into fellowship with God.

But don’t take my word for it... we need to hear someone of authority.

And while I wouldn't advise you follow the example of these religious rulers, let's see next what they have to say about Jesus's authority...

RULERS QUESTION JESUS' AUTHORITY. (v28)

Mark 11:28

And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

Here is the most consequential question anyone could ask Jesus, and the answer to it has been being argued throughout Mark's Gospel.

Maybe this is a question you have. Possibly, you have been too afraid to voice it for whatever reason.

When asked truthfully and not in a scorning way like these members of the Sanhedrin, both of these questions are good questions to ask.

1. By what authority did Jesus do "these things"?
2. And who gave Him this authority?

We already know the assumption Jesus's antagonists hold as the answer to this question. Collaborating scribes from Jerusalem had already traveled to make this accusation against Jesus:

Mark 3:22-30

²² And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

²³ And he called them *unto him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

²⁴ And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

²⁵ And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

²⁶ And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

²⁷ No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

²⁸ Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

²⁹ But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:

³⁰ Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

Okay, now that we cleared up the antagonists scornful assumptions, let's see what really is true about Jesus's authority. What has God been telling us through Mark about the level and source of Jesus's authority?

Mark 1:21-28; 2:10-11, 21-22; 28; 3:14-15; 4:39; 5:19; 38-42; 6:7, 11, 41, 48-50; 7:5-8; 8:38; 9:7, 41; 10:18, 21, 51-52; 11:3, 15-18

Mark 1:21-28

²¹ And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

²² And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

²³ And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

²⁴ Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

²⁵ And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

²⁶ And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

²⁷ And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine *is* this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

²⁸ And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

Mark 11:15-18

¹⁵ And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the

seats of them that sold doves;

¹⁶ And would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessel through the temple.

¹⁷ And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.

¹⁸ And the scribes and chief priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

In between these two accounts are testimonies of Jesus's power to:

- Forgive sins
- Calm storms and walk on water as God
- Raise the dead
- Rebuke teachers of the Law
- Clarify the purpose of God's Law as the Lord of it
- Condemn esteemed traditions of the religious rulers
- Warn of final judgment before Him
- Proclaim how to enter the kingdom of God by following Him
- Receive the title Christ and Lord
- Ransom sinners, heal the blind, and gather in the outcasts

Do you see which side has the evidence?

All that the priests, scribes, and elders can do is scorn—just like the scorners of our day.

Don't be intimidated by intelligent scorners. It doesn't matter the size of words someone uses... scorning is still scorning... mockery is still mockery.

Those who have no evidence or argument resort to mockery because that's all they have.

The truth is, sinners just want to refuse God and every revelation He gives.

Don't refuse the things God has done in Christ.

Q: How have you tried to suppress the truth of God’s revelation? How do you see society and false teachers doing it today?

JESUS LINKS HIS AUTHORITY TO PRIOR REVELATION . (v29-30)

You might say, well of course Mark is going to write all these things about Jesus. He believes in Jesus’s authority!

Well, the religious rulers of Jesus’s day never denied Jesus’s authoritative works. They merely slandered the source of Jesus’s authority!

Even unbiased historical records give witness to this truth.

But notice how Jesus answers this time by pointing to prior revelation of God outside His own works...

Mark 11:29-30

And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was *it* from heaven, or of men? answer me.

Jesus links His authority to the authority of prior revelation from God in John the Baptist’s ministry.

Of course, Jesus answers in a way that turns the questioning around and keeps Him in the authoritative seat as He ought to be.

But before we get to the clever prudence of Jesus’s question, let’s get to the strong ways by which Jesus draws on “John’s baptism.”

First, Jesus is broadly referring to whether or not John is a true prophet and thereby fulfilling prior prophecies of Malachi and “preparing the way for the LORD and His Messiah.”

If John is a true prophet with a message from “heaven,” meaning from God, then Jesus must be both the LORD and His Messiah. There is no other way to interpret John’s message.

And if that is true, then Jesus’s confrontation in the temple is the authoritative fulfillment of Scripture.

And if that is true, these chief priests, scribes, and elders better repent and behold the Lamb of God!

So, Jesus’s astoundingly wise answer forced these rulers to look to the past and present prophets to determine where Jesus’s authority comes from.

That is the same way we look to see where Jesus’s authority came from.

Even in Jesus’s earthly ministry, the call to have faith in Jesus was to also a call to have faith in what God had said about Him in the prophets!

Secondly, Jesus was also referring more specifically to the event when John baptized Jesus.

Even the parable Jesus teaches that we will look at next week uses the description of Jesus as “one son, his wellbeloved” as a way to tie the two together.

Do you remember the significance of Jesus’s baptism of John?

Mark 1:7, 9-11; Psalm 2:6-7; Isaiah 42:1; Exodus 4:22

Mark 1:7

⁷ And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

Mark 1:9-11

⁹ And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

¹⁰ And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:

¹¹ And there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

In addition to this being a significant revelation of God declaring Jesus’s authority and identity, the Father’s words also connect Jesus with the much anticipated Messianic Son-

King, Suffering Servant, Sacrificial Son, and Israel as God's son going through the waters of baptism into the wilderness and then the Promised Land...

The OT & NT writers saw and believed these connections.

Even 2nd temple Jewish writers wrote of connections between such passages as the ones listed in the bulletin as pointing to the promised Messiah.

And the Father uses words from each of those passages to thread together His prophetic promises with the incarnate realization in the Son.

Do you see it? The person and teachings of Jesus are directly connected with God's promises in Scripture.

Beware disconnecting the person and teachings of Jesus from the authority of inspired Scripture .

Q: What errors come from picking and choosing some Scriptures over others?

- Elevating the “red letters” above the rest of Scripture given by the Spirit of Christ.
- Rejecting instruction God has given us through other writers, like Paul.
- Using these sort of abuses of Scripture to teach perverted doctrines.

How can that happen? False teachers disconnect the person and teaching of Jesus from the authority of the rest of Scripture.

The whole of Scriptures prophesied of Christ, His mission, and the work He is doing now through His church.

And the whole of Scripture reveals the truth necessary to believe and live according to the Gospel.

But those who do not fear God will do everything they can to try to rationalize and recruit rebels against Christ...

RULERS CALCULATE BASED ON FEAR OF MAN . (v31-32)

Fear of man is a crippling, ungodly thing. *It is the opposite of fear of God...*

10,000 Sermon Illustrations Aslan the Lion

Aslan the Lion

In The Chronicles of Narnia, an allegory by C. S. Lewis, the author has two girls, Susan and Lucy, getting ready to meet Aslan the lion, who represents Christ. Two talking animals, Mr. and Mrs. Beaver, prepare the children for the encounter.

“Ooh,” said Susan, “I thought he was a man. Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion.”

“That you will, dearie,” said Mrs. Beaver. “And make no mistake, if there’s anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they’re either braver than most or else just silly.”

“Then isn’t he safe?” said Lucy.

“Safe?” said Mr. Beaver. “Don’t you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? Of course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the king, I tell you!”

Our Daily Bread, February 17, 1994

Well, these blind rulers know nothing of the fear of God....

Mark 11:31-32

And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all *men* counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

These religious rulers huddled together to reason, brainstorm, and discuss a calculated answer to give Jesus.

They wanted to just reject Jesus’s words because they didn’t fear Him.

But, they feared the people who thought both Jesus and John the Baptist were prophets.

John was widely respected, and now he was a martyred prophet! They would inherit the wrath of the people if they discredited John.

Notice even more that this theme of fearing man runs through and ties together the proceeding and following accounts:

Mark 11:18

And the scribes and chief priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

Mark 12:12

¹² And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

They did what we often disdain but more and more accept by people in political office: *people please*.

They did what false or weak religious leaders do in our day: *people please in order to keep their income and following*.

They did what we too often do when we are asked questions about God... morality... righteousness: *people please*.

Do you know the only lasting solution to people-pleasing? Fear of God.

Matthew 10:27-28

²⁷ What I tell you in darkness, *that* speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the housetops.

²⁸ And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

In Matthew, Jesus tells His disciples to boldly declare in the future what He taught in secret to them.

And Jesus instructs His disciples to fear God and not the people enough to obey.

Fear God, and be freed from the deception of fearing man.

Fearing man is crippling. How many times have we disobeyed God because we didn't fear God more than people?

Truly, this is a blot to our world.

If we feared God instead of people, our world would be full of justice, righteousness, honesty, and peace.

But its not. Instead, our world is full of dishonest, people-pleasers who are more willing to disobey God than man.

Q: How has public pressure hindered your faithfulness to God? How does it influence religious groups, businesses, and governments? What should the church do about this?

So not only must we know we are created to live in God's presence... and we must not refuse what God has done in Christ... and we cannot disconnect Christ from Scripture... and we ought to fear God not man... also, we must trust God and be freed from lying to ourselves.

So next we see:

RULERS REFUSE TO TELL THE TRUTH . (v33)

Here is the problem. Everything we have seen so far points to this.

If we follow the apostate religious rulers example, we will lie to God, others, and ourselves...

Mark 11:33

And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Come on... "we cannot tell"? Right!

Liars. They were unwilling to tell.

They refused to believe God's revelation, and they refused God's promised coming right in front of them.

Watch out for blind liars! Our world is full of them.

You might be one now!

If you are saved in Christ, you were once a blind liar, but now you've been made to see and tell the truth!

No matter who you are today:

Trust God, and be freed from lying to yourself.

It is impossible to be truthful as you ought without trusting God.

At some point, unbelief will lead to lies. It has to!

And one lie leads to another and another.

No wonder the world is full of liars... it is full of rebels against God and His Christ!

But this is to be expected of the world. It is a real shame when unbelief and lying is accepted by those who claim to follow Christ.

Why is it that even professing Christians are afraid to tell the truth about Jesus, Scripture, and all that God requires?

Q: Do you really want to know the truth? Is it your desire to *obey* God or to *use* God?

This is what it often comes down to.

Is God worshipped and obeyed as our sovereign Creator, or is our created form of a god used to get what we want out of people?

These faithless rulers used their idolatrous version of a god to control the people.

These rulers weren't telling the people what they really believed. They were using them too.

That's what happens when we don't fear God: *we make ourselves a god.*

No matter how much they claimed to follow the LORD, if they rejected His prophets (as Jesus will further make clear in chapter 12) and if they rejected the promised Messiah, they rejected the LORD!

They tried to use the LORD and seize His temple.

And Jesus gives them exactly what they want... to be left without further revelation from God...

JESUS DENIES NEW REVELATION TO THESE WHO REFUSE PRIOR REVELATION . (v33)

I want us to look one more time at v33.

Mark 11:33

And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

What does Jesus do when they lie to Him and refuse God's revelation?

Jesus refuses to reveal more about Himself.

He cuts them off!

Jesus gives them the silent treatment on this subject of His authority.

Jesus has more to tell them, but the words He has to say are words of judgment... condemnation... prophetic witness of coming destruction and sure judgment.

Hear God's Word now, or you may never.

You can't wait and plan to repent and believe later in life. It may never come.

There is nothing worse than being cut off from God and His Word.

It amounts to being left to our own selves.

Do you know what that results to?

No! We don't know what it ultimately results to. We have never yet seen it.

God still actively restrains evil in our day.

We see evils now... but imagine if it was unrestrained.

Picture Noah's day but worse.

Think of the tower of Babel type of pursuing demonic powers to rebel against God.

Think of history's worst wars multiplied far beyond what we can imagine.

Think of hell.

Rejecting God's Word when He gives it results in never being rescued from our sin, receiving God's just judgment, and being cut off from God eternally.

So instead of refusing God and lying like these apostate religious rulers, we should cry out for mercy and obey when the King calls like blind Bartimaeus.

Today! Hear God's voice.

10,000 Sermon Illustrations Dirty Room

Dirty Room

A friend often told me about the problems he had getting his son to clean his room. The son would always agree to tidy up, but then wouldn't follow through. After high school the young man joined the Marine Corps. When he came home for leave after basic training, his father asked him what he had learned in the service.

"Dad," he said. "I learned what 'now' means."

Contributed by Jan King, Humor in Uniform, Readers Digest, May, 1996, p. 174.

Today! Hear God's voice.

Even as believers, we must continue to confirm our call of salvation by hearing and obeying God's Word and Christ.

Hebrews 3:6-14

⁶ But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

⁷ Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

⁸ Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

⁹ When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

¹⁰ Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways.

¹¹ So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

¹² Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

¹³ But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

¹⁴ For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

**Q: At its core, what does judgment from God look like?
And how does that relate to what sinners truly want?**

God's judgment gives sinners what they think they want: *existence without God.*

But notice I said what they think they want.

This is to be cut off from God under His judgment.

No sinner will ever find this to be satisfying now or in death.

The problem is that the sin in us desires the opposite of what we most need.

The truth is that God's Word reveals what we need as sinners, not what we want.

It reveals what only satisfies, but not what sinners naturally feast on.

It frees from the bondage sinners embrace.

God's Word reveals God, but sinners want Satan.

It calls to life, but sinners love death.

It fills hearts with truth, but sinners want truth suppressed.

So what are we to do?

Heed God's command, not your lust.

Trust God's revelation, not your idolatry.

Repent from the sin you crave.

Rely upon the Savior you need.

Like Bartimaeus, cry out for mercy.

And unlike the apostate Sanhedrin, believe on Christ.

CONCLUSION

Jesus links the source of His authority to God's prior revelation. Therefore, obeying God's Word demands following Jesus, and following Jesus demands obeying God's Word.

God created us and has all authority over us.

As promised, He came to us in Christ.

God pursues us in love.

God reveals Himself in Christ and Scripture.

Despite what sin and Satan will tell us, there is absolutely no good reason to disobey God's Word and not follow His Son.

The very authority of God is in Scripture, and when we reject what God has said in Scripture, we reject the Son Who came to save us.

We can't pick and choose.

The very authority of God is in the Son, and all who reject Jesus the Son will remain cut off from God and judged according to God's Word.

The two go together. God's Word and Son.

We're not following Christ if we are not obeying God's Word.

And we are not obeying God's Word if we are not following Christ.

That can either be good news to you or a message of judgment.

Remember, God is good and faithful to reveal both His Word and His Son.

And His Son was blamed for all our sins and failing.

John the Baptist announced Jesus as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world.

Jesus's baptism proclaimed both Jesus's authority as the Son and Jesus's commitment to suffer for sinners as the Savior.

Mark will soon tells us how Jesus died and rose again, satisfying the good, just judgment of God for whosoever will repent and believe this good news of Christ.

So not only does God command, but also, God enables.

We are without excuse.

You and I *can* obey and follow both God's Word and God's Son.

And that means we *can* live according to the way God authoritatively created and rules us.

God has not left us on our own, but He does require that we continue to repent and believe His Word and Son.

Main Argument: We are made to walk in obedience with God through faith in His authoritative Word and Son.