

## **Discovering God's Character through our Struggles: Authority**

*Sunday, August 30th*

This is actually going to be one of the longest previews of my last sermon that I've ever given. But I wanted to share just a little bit about some things we talked about last week as we move into our sermon this week, just talking about authority. But we spoke last week about the commandment not to murder. Has anyone ever murdered someone? Don't highlighting that we struggle with peace in our lives and murder begins when we lose our peace and we plant seeds of hatred within our hearts and we allow those seeds to grow and they grow into attitudes that we harbor in our hearts whispers that we speak in in our minds and thoughts that come to our heads and And then when we give life to them, we speak them out. We vocalize them. And the moment that we vocalize them, it moves very quickly to our hands and becomes an action instead of just a thought. If we're not careful, that will ultimately bring us to the place where the hate and rage in our hearts will bring murder to our hands. And that is why Jesus equates hate to being equal to murder, because that's where it starts. It starts in the heart, and if it's unchecked and let it grow, it becomes an action. I'll get there. Give me a second. But as we've been going through these commandments, last week we learned that God reveals himself to us to help us through this struggle of peace by showing us how to forgive. We can stop the hate in our heart if we're willing to forgive. And I learned last week and this past week as I've thought about this, I gave you a list several weeks ago about those sermons pastors don't like to preach. I think I should have put forgiveness in there too, as far as being difficult sermons to speak on. But I want to share something that I find odd with preaching. And if you've never preached a sermon, I just want to give you just a little bit of an insight what it's like to preach a sermon and share something that bothers me as I do this every week. And here it is. It's like I stand up here and I get, if I can twist your arm and make you sit there long enough, 45 minutes to an hour sometimes. Not really much. I mean, lately it hasn't been that long, but about 45 minutes to try to explain a topic or a point that people have written whole books about. And I get about three or four paragraphs to highlight, present, and mark something that that the Holy Spirit is giving me to share to the church. And it is impossible to cover every aspect and perspective in a 45-minute TED Talk about something. And so I only say that to highlight the difficulty and to understand the complexity of trying to preach God's Word because It isn't done from an encompassing perspective. It's done by how the Holy Spirit is leading and guiding me or whoever is speaking in the moment, how they are guiding them in that time. But I wanted to share just a little bit more about forgiveness. As I studied last week and dug into it, Having several questions, having several comments, both good. Things that helped and things that some people struggled with. But I began to continue reading in Matthew chapter 5 where Jesus says, talks about hate being equal to murder. He continues on in that same chapter down in a few verses later in verse 25. And there's this story that Jesus tells. He says, agree with your adversary quickly while you're on the way with him to the judge, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge. The judge hand you over to the officer and you're thrown into prison. Now, as I read that this week, I realized I had that scripture backwards in my mind. Because the person bringing the case before the judge, that the scripture calls the adversary. If something is an adversary, what is that? That's the bad guy, right? So in my mind, it's like this is the adversary. I'm not the bad guy. I'm opposed to that guy. But in this story, it's interesting because the person bringing the case before the judge, who's called the adversary, is the one who was wronged. If you're going to sue somebody, typically that comes because someone has done something against you, someone has wronged you, someone has taken, stolen, abused you in some way, and you're going to take them to court. Correct? So that's what's happening here in this passage in verse 25 of Matthew 5. The offended is taking the offender to court. But the scripture says that the onus is on the offender to make reconciliation before they get to the judge. And that's kind of... what helped me change how I see this process of repentance and forgiveness and reconciliation. See, repentance is followed by seeking reconciliation. The offender gives repentance for the wrong that they've done, and then

they seek reconciliation. Forgiveness is followed up by the offended when someone gives repentance, and then they can help facilitate reconciliation. You're going to have to listen to last week because I'm not giving you the whole sermon right now. But what I wanted to share is this. For relationship to be restored, the person who offended or wronged us and I don't know how that happens, it could be abuse, it could be from stealing, or it can be in any other number of damaging ways, the offender must come with repentance. What is repentance? True repentance is where the offender has demonstrated a change of thought and action to correct the wrong they have committed, to recognize and take responsibility for the damage caused by their actions. It's really easy to say, hey, I'm sorry for doing that, but never see change. That's not true repentance. But once the offender has offered true repentance, only then can the offended offer forgiveness for said offense. When there is repentance that is given. And when we offer that forgiveness, we must be willing to facilitate reconciliation. But as I shared last week several times, just because there is repentance and forgiveness, that does not mean that all consequences are eliminated. That doesn't mean there's freedom from all consequences. So I hope that helps if I hope that clears up some stuff from last week talking about forgiveness. But if there's no repentance, there cannot be any forgiveness in the relationship. I also shared last week, if there's no repentance, someone's like, well, how can I forgive them? The idea is that we have to be willing to. Forgiveness is conditional. There's conditions that have to be met for forgiveness to be given to someone who offends you. And I spoke about this in the realm of God. How many would say that God is an unforgiving God? Does God forgive everybody? Does he? Who does he forgive? Those who come and offer repentance to him. There has to be a condition met for repentance to be given and forgiveness to be offered. And so I would ask you, as I would every week when you hear a message from me, do your own study concerning the Scriptures that we have, the topic that we're talking about, and any offenses, especially in the realm of forgiveness and repentance and reconciliation. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you to what you are supposed to do. His Word is far superior to mine, and He can speak way better than me. Amen? All right. Sorry, that was the longest review of the sermon before. So I want to move this week into our sermon talking about the commandment to honor our father and mother. We have been going through the commandments from the 10th commandment and working our way to the first one. We're talking about these commandments and how they highlight struggles in our life. And how God reveals a character trait of himself to help us fight these struggles that we have. And so this morning, we're going to be in Matthew chapter 28, if you'd like to turn there. The commandment we have this morning is to honor our father and mother. Our struggle that we have with this commandment is that we struggle with authority. And God reveals himself as the God of wisdom to help us submit to authority. And so Matthew chapter 28, we're going to be on verse 18. And it says this, And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Amen. Let's pray this morning. Father, we thank you for the opportunity to be in your house this morning. We thank you, Lord, that we can come and listen to your word, that we were able to lift up our hands and to sing praises to your name, Father. And Lord, we ask as we now sit and prepare our hearts for the word that you have for us this morning, God, that you would anoint my lips to speak only what you would have me say, that you would anoint our ears to hear only what you would have us to hear and to apply it to our hearts. to make us more like your Son, Jesus. We ask this in your name, in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Parents. How many of you have parents? It's kind of a rhetorical question. But it takes a father and a mother to bring life to us. Each one of us has a father and mother. You may not like them. You may not know them. They might be good. They might be bad. They might be loved. They might be hated. But it is a relationship that we do not get to choose. nor do we get to change. Your parents will always be your parents, no matter what happens. It's biology. And it stays with us our whole life. As I said, you don't have to like it, you don't have to love it, but the truth is the truth. And I personally feel extremely fortunate. I have wonderful parents. They're both still alive. They encourage me. They encourage my family. They offer advice. They still give me tough words of correction. And they're always pointing me to Jesus. So I know that I'm blessed when I speak about parents this morning.

And I also understand that my situation may not be your situation. But in that same vein, we all serve the same God. And we can learn from what God would teach us this morning from this commandment. So we find our commandment in Exodus chapter 20. Verse 12, it says, So we are commanded to honor our parents. I'm not sure... if you've ever thought of it this way, and I know we all have, but maybe not in these terms necessarily, but our parents are our first introduction to an authority structure that we have zero power to change. Even though we can cry as babies, even though we can whine, our parents are the very first authority structure we run up against in our terrible little toddler life. And early on, we are confronted with an authority that rivals and subverts our own will. We've all been around little kids. They can be monsters sometimes, but we always have those good parents who are there to tell their kids what? No. No. That's the first bumper we hit with authority. We learned the word no. And it can be for all kinds of things. Whenever we want to do something and like take the fork and stick it in the electric socket, it's not a good idea. And so the parents are there to say, no, don't do that. Whenever they want to go running to the road, we say, hey, stop, come back here. We don't touch that. It could break and it could be very expensive for me. We tell our kids to go to bed because we need a few minutes of peace. We tell our kids to share because they think everything is theirs and nothing is for nobody else. We tell them to be nice. We tell them to don't punch. I almost said we tell them to punch. We tell them not to punch. We tell them not to bite. We tell them to eat this. We say don't eat that. But as children, we run into this authority structure that shapes and moves and pushes against our own will and isn't something that we always want to do. And I find every time we offer one of those, don't do this, don't do that, do this, do that, we will always find the response that I believe is asked more times in our life than any other question. And we experienced 50% of them before we turn 18. And it's the question, why? why why why can't i do this why can't i punch them they were mean to me why can't i bite them they look yummy i don't know but the question we will ask long into our adulthood is the question why why and this is where our struggle with authority begins But before jumping into talking about authority and defining it and laying it out, I want us to understand one word that will help us as we go through this concept of authority in our lives. In Exodus 20, verse 12, the commandment says to honor our father and mother. If you have a translation that says obey, I feel like it does us a disservice. Because that's a great word for everyone who's under 18. I believe that everyone under 18, yes, you should obey your parents. But as a man, I don't have to obey my parents. Right? Wow. That's interesting. I'm not trying to trick you. Okay, I'm going to have to, hang on, I've got to change my sermon now. But as an adult, I don't have to obey everything my parents once told me. I don't have to go to bed at 8 o'clock every night. I don't have to wait to eat dessert until after I've eaten supper. You know, you guys can, you can throw that stuff around and switch it up a little bit, right? I can make my own choices. I have to suffer my own consequences, but I can make my own choices. The word that is used in Exodus chapter 20 is the word kabad, and it gives the idea of weight or heaviness or significance. And this is going to help us as we talk about authority. So when we honor our parents, both as children and adults, we give proper weight to their position. We give proper weight to their position. So for me, outside of my wife and my kids when they speak intelligent, the most important voices in my life are my parents. My son was offended by that statement. See, I give their words and their opinions greater weight than most other people in my life based upon the commandment here in Exodus chapter 20. So how I honor them as a 47-year-old man is I value and listen to what they have to say. I give it The respect and the weight that it deserves in my life, that doesn't mean that I have to follow it or obey it, but I have to give it value in my life. That's how I honor my parents. That's how you can honor your parents. And this is an extremely vital concept when it comes to authority in our life. See, God isn't merely implying that we obey our parents and every authority that is over us. See how that now changes? Well, you guys are thinking this morning. I like it. Rather, we are to give proper weight to them, proper significance to the voices of authority in our life. What's interesting about biblical authority is that it does not mean that one person has greater value than another. It means someone has been entrusted with a responsibility and will ultimately answer to God. This is going to become very important in just a little bit. See, God begins by commanding us

to honor our parents, to give proper respect and weight for the position that he has given them in our lives. Because you didn't choose your parents, right? You know who chose your parents? God did. So we are to give proper respect and weight for the position that God has given them in our lives. But how many... understand that we quickly begin to transition into other authority structures we have our parents but then we get to go to school and we now have teachers when we get old enough we have coaches my coaches are mean in high school but they taught me good lessons after we have coaches we have bosses boy despicable people right After that, there are pastors, there are police officials, there are government officials, and I don't even know how many other authority structures you might have in place over you. But what I do know is that very quickly in life, we discover we don't like authority, or we don't like the people who have authority over us, would probably be the better way to say it. Lord help me. It's interesting. When we think of someone who's in authority over us and we don't have a proper view of that authority. Often we think of those people as very lowly in our life, or we don't like them, especially when they come up against us and exercise their authority in a way that we don't necessarily want to submit to, right? Listen to what God tells Daniel in chapter 4, verse 17. It says, "...so that everyone may know that the Most High rules over the kingdoms of the world. He gives them to anyone He chooses." Even the bestest of the people. No. Even the lowest of people. Boy, that makes you understand governments a whole lot more, right? Now, I was really looking forward to this subject this week because as Americans, we love the overarching freedom and independence we magically grant ourselves, especially living in Montana. We live in big sky country, right? We don't like walls. We like the big open spaces. We don't like to be contained or held down or tied down or held back. But I want to reveal a guilty pleasure to you guys. I have, and maybe you don't do this, and if you don't, that's fine. You can just laugh at me. I'm okay with that. But we live in a day of social media. We live in a day where people will post these reels, and everyone wants you to live your life watching them live their life in one-minute clips. Okay? You just got to sit there and watch them live their life. But I have a couple of them that I truly love. One of them, there's this guy, he's called the Hoof GP. I don't know if you know who this guy is. He lives in Scotland and he trims cows' feet for a living. I cannot not watch one when I see it. I have to watch the whole thing. Don't laugh, you probably have a weirder one than me. But there's another one that I am coming to just thoroughly enjoy. And there is this sheriff in Pino County, Arizona. His name is Frank. And he posts these videos of his conversations with people he pulls over. And, boy, do you meet some people who just esteem authority in amazing ways. Yeah. They absolutely hate this guy, and I just get a kick out of watching them. Guilty pleasure, like I said. I was watching one just the other week, and this guy was really mad about being pulled over. And Frank says, well, if you don't like the laws, you don't have to drive in Penal County. And so it's just that's the concept we have of authority. We just don't like someone telling us that we have to do something we don't want to do. And as people collectively, we don't like when authority limits our freedom. We want to have the freedom to do what we want to do. And I realize that this is probably wasted breath this morning because there's no one here this morning that struggles with authority in our church. There's no one who fights or disapproves of authority. We all love to be told what to do, how to do it, when and where we can do it without being able to ask why. Is that you? You're a liar, Dave. Sorry, Dave. That was mean. I shouldn't have said that. No. As much as we like to think that we are free, our freedom really only truly works if we live under authority. So in this context, we have to think of our government, both city, state, county, federal, however you want to look at it, These institutions provide order through laws and regulation of those laws that give us the ability to live life as free as we can. And as long as we live in the constraints of those laws and rules, we have relative freedom. I was talking to Brother Tom the other day. Was it you guys? I don't remember who it was. No, it might have been Susan Rogge. She said she always sets the cruise control to the speed limit because you don't have to worry about the cops. If you're going the speed limit, there's complete freedom to drive down the road and you don't care what's coming the other way because you're not guilty of breaking the speed limit. So there's this freedom that we find if we operate within the order that authority gives. But that's only on one level. There's other levels of authority that are

a little bit different. There's parental authority. There's family structure. There's God and how he gives authority and works through authority. There's workplace. There's your church. There's the beloved HOAs that you live in. There's schools. There's even authority in nature. If you jump off a cliff that's 100 feet tall, gravity will work. There are rules that govern our lives, even if we don't want them to. But we like to think that we are an authority unto ourselves. I am the king of my castle, right? Wrong. Almost nowhere in life is that a true statement. I would actually venture to say nowhere in life is that a true statement. Because if it goes against what I want to do, I immediately push back. I'm not going to be kowtowed. I'm not going to be pushed over. And that is our basic struggle with authority. We want the power and the freedom to choose and decide what we want, when we want it, how we want it. And we don't want anybody to tell us that we're wrong. And we don't want to suffer any negative consequences. So how do you and I resist authority? We resist authority when it corrects us. How many of us love to be told we're wrong? Not one of us. I resist authority when it limits me, when I feel like I should be able to do this to my heart's content. We resist authority when it disagrees with me. We resist authority when it slows me down. I have had this so many times this week. Someone pulls out in traffic doing four miles an hour and it's like, holy cow, guys. We resist authority when it tells me no. When it requires something inconvenient from me. When it sees something different. when it makes a decision that I wouldn't make, but I still have to abide by the choice. And what's interesting is, as much as this applies to man, it applies to God. It all boils down to this one idea. We don't like someone else telling us what to do because I know what's best for me and I want to do it my way. Frank Sinatra's old song, right? I want to do it my way. And I can understand why we don't like some authority, especially in the realm of the humankind. Because guess what? Humans are perfect in every instance, right? No. Authority is often and can be very easily abused. And people excel at being foolish with any kind of power that is given to them. Absolute power corrupts absolutely, which is why most of us struggle with authority. Our struggle with authority boils down to this one thought. It's the fear that I can't trust you to do the right thing having power over me. It's having to submit to someone that you don't fully trust that my interest is at your heart, right? That's their struggle with authority. That means I might have to endure something that is going to be bad for me because you so happen to have a position in authority over me. There's fear that we can't trust who's in power. So knowing that we all struggle with authority, is there anyone here who doesn't struggle with authority? Have I not touched someone yet? Am I done? Are we ready to move on? Okay. Let's establish where this authority comes from. Romans chapter 13, verses 1 and 2. Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. We all know that passage, but guess what? It continues. For there is no authority except from God. And the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists who? God? Oh, wait, no, I'm resisting that guy. No. You're ultimately resisting God. And those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. One of my favorite things about Frank in Arizona is that when people resist, it's just wonderful to watch those guys get their just due because judgment comes very quickly upon them. And it's quite exciting. Guilty pleasure. I told you, guilty pleasure. Boy, these passages of Scripture present us with a problem, right? There are two things that I see here this morning. The first one is that there is no authority except from God. God has all authority. Second is that the authorities that exist don't just exist by happen chance. They exist because God specifically and purposely placed them there. If you're like me, that just rubbed me wrong in a lot of ways. Because if you, like me, thought through history and observed things that went down in different types of governments and different types of people through our nation, through the world, we would have to conclude that, one, either a good God could not have ordained or appointed that, or that Scripture's wrong. Because God wouldn't appoint someone like Adolf Hitler to rule a nation. But remember what Daniel said, lowest of people. There are times when the lowest of people get chosen to be placed in authority. But even in these concepts, because they're such big picture, they're historical or they're happening somewhere else. Well, yeah, I can maybe see how God was orchestrating that for the greater good of what he's doing. But let's bring it down to a more personal level now. Because God has established the authority that we have in our states, that we have in our cities, that we have

in our churches, that we have in our families, that we have in our lives. If you are under any kind of authority, God has purposely placed you underneath it and appointed them in that place of authority above you. See, all authority comes from God. All authority comes from God. The good godly authority comes from God. The horrible, tyrannical, killing authorities come from God. That's a hard pill to swallow, isn't it? We don't like that. Because it presents us with a problem. Authority can be bad sometimes. And our problem is that even though God appoints and has all authority, people don't use it well. They're not wise with the authority that they've given. And that brings us to a place in our heart where we're not willingly able or excited or available to submit to that authority, even though it's a legit authority. So what do we do? How do we get past this impasse of authority that's a problem to us? Well, we have to look to the God who has established and holds all authority. What kind of God is that? He's the God of wisdom. That's how God helps us get through this authority problem that we have. We have to understand who it is that has placed the authority there. And if it's God, well, God knows what he's doing, right? And if you don't believe it, I'll convince you. Romans 11, verse 33 says, See, God's wisdom and knowledge is so deep that His wisdom is perfect. We can't even begin to search out the depths of His wisdom. See, we can trust that God knows what he's doing because there's nothing that God doesn't know. You need some scripture to help you with that? See, God never lacks information. Psalm 147 says his understanding is infinite. It knows no end. There isn't anything to be known that God does not know. Hebrews chapter 4 says there is no creature hidden from him. So even the worst of the people that God could appoint in an authoritative position, he knows everything about them. He knows the hairs on their heads as well. There's nothing he doesn't know about them. 1 John chapter 3 says that God knows all things. See, because... because of these passages, because of who God is, God never miscalculates. He doesn't have to be like, oh, wait a minute. Wait, wait a minute. Didn't see that. Stink. I made a mistake. There's never that GPS voice of rerouting with God. He hasn't miscalculated anything. The map that he has laid out, he has laid it out because he knows the end from the beginning. Isaiah chapter 46, before my life started, God saw me on my deathbed. Never missed a breath in my life, never missed a step, never missed a toenail, nothing. God perfectly laid out my life because he could see the end before I was even a twinkle in my dad's eye. He has all the information. God will never be able to say, darn, if I would have known that was going to happen, I would have done this. See, because of his knowledge and wisdom, he never misunderstands the consequences of the authority that he places. He doesn't miscalculate how that person will act and react and be in that place of authority, but rather he has planned out everything down to the breath of the person. And you know what? Earth-shattering news for you today. God doesn't need your advice. He doesn't need your advice. There isn't anything he doesn't know. Matthew Henry makes this comment talking about this passage. He says he needs no counselor for his. He is infinitely wise. See, God's wisdom is perfect. He has the perfect ability to know, to order, to direct and accomplish exactly what he wants to accomplish. Because he sees the end from the beginning. And that brings us back to Romans chapter 13. For there is no authority except from God, and there is no authority that is not appointed except by God. So whenever we are struggling with authority, we can be willing to submit to said authority because, well, they didn't get there by their own conniving. If we are truly going to trust what is happening and what Scripture says is true, God must have a purpose that I don't truly understand. I might not fully grasp everything that's going on. I might not be able to see tomorrow in what God is doing. But God does. See, God has appointed an established authority to teach us to submit. and to help reveal His wisdom. Do you want my proof? I have scriptural proof for you. Luke 2, verses 51 and 52. This is the story of Jesus. And then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and he was subject to them. But his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men. If you're unfamiliar with the passage that's going on in chapter 2 of Luke, Jesus is 12 years old. He stayed behind in Jerusalem after the feast and he was teaching the priest in the temple about God. His parents realize that he's not with them. They go back to Jerusalem. They find Jesus, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, who was before creation, who saw Joseph and Mary's life before they were even

created and understood that he was going to be their child, submitted to the authority of an imperfect mother and father. in jerusalem not because joseph and mary were wise or perfect or the best but because god established and placed them in authority over jesus while he was here on earth and i find it interesting jesus even on the cross follows the command to honor his mother by taking care of her while he is dying for the sins of the world. He is still being submitted to his own mother as he's hanging on the cross. And after Jesus suffers the cross, is resurrected from the dead, Matthew 28, verse 18, Jesus stands and says, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. See, submission doesn't always mean that the person over me knows more, deserves it more, has earned it. Rather, submission recognizes that I'm not always the highest authority in any given relationship. You're not the pinnacle. You're not the most important. Paul teaches us that in the book of Ephesians. Christ is the highest authority. Chapter 5 says Christ is the highest authority. Husbands are to submit to Christ, just as wives are to submit to husbands. There's a structure there. But he doesn't leave it there, he continues. Chapter 6, the children are to submit to their parents, workers to their bosses. He says slave and masters, but we don't really have those nowadays. See, we, you and I, can submit to the authority structure that God has placed over us, whether we like it or not. Because when we truly understand where that authority is coming from, we understand that we are really submitting to God, not a person. And guess what? The authority doesn't have to be good. It doesn't have to be right. It can even be bad. And God can honor you by choosing to submit to the authority that God has placed you under. Because Jesus says, or God says, that vengeance is mine. He also says that those who have authority will receive a greater judgment. They will have to answer for the things that they have done. It's not like they get off scot-free. But just as our scripture said earlier, if we choose to resist that authority, guess who receives the judgment then? Raise your hand, because it's you. If we skip the process of authority that God has designed for us to live under, we then assume the judgment that the leader or the person in authority should have gotten for doing the wrong. Man, that's not fair, is it? See, we don't know why God appoints some people to authority. Maybe it's to accomplish his divine purpose somewhere down the road. We don't know. But we do know that God understands how he wants his kingdom to unfold. He knows the end from the beginning. He knows the exact perfect path to get where he needs to be. And those choices are his to make, not ours. And it all starts with honoring our mother and our father. Seems kind of a stretch, doesn't it? God ultimately accomplishes his purpose for all of creation with the simple lesson of teaching us to give weight to the position that God has given our parents over our lives. See, everyone who's in authority has limited knowledge. They can misunderstand, they can miscalculate, they can receive and act upon bad advice. And they often make decisions without all the facts. And as you know, they will often disappoint us in how they use their authority. But above every earthly authority stands the wisdom of God. He's never without the information. He's never without. He never makes miscalculations, should I say. He never needs advice, but he always makes the exact correct move in every situation, whether we like it or not, whether we understand the why or not. God does. And we can trust that he does because there's no knowledge that he doesn't have. There's no mistake that he can make. His wisdom allows him to purposely order and place everything in exactly where it needs to be, to unfold exactly how it needs to be, to bring everyone to the desired end that he has appointed for them. We can trust in God through the authority that he has given us. Amen. Amen. Stand with me this morning. When we understand that God is operating from perfect wisdom, that allows me to overcome my struggle with authority because God is the one who is truly running the show. God is ultimately in control. He hasn't missed anything. And I can trust that His love is perfect towards me, that His goal is to bring me to a desired end, that I am with Him in heaven, standing beside Him for eternity. That doesn't mean that it won't be difficult. That doesn't mean that you won't face situations that you don't like, that you think are wrong, that you think you're suffering unjustly. But at the end of the day, if we choose to be obedient and to submit to the authority that God has given us, God will enact any correction or judgment upon the authority if it was wrong. And again, as with all things, I know this is a very deep subject and I may not have touched every facet or perspective of this authority. But as I said

last week, I would encourage you, if you're truly struggling with something, take some time and fast and pray. Submit it to the Holy Spirit. Ask him to lead and guide you because his wisdom is perfect. And he can speak to you and lead you where you need to be in whatever situation you find yourself in. Amen? Amen.

Father, we thank You, Lord, for Your Word this morning. Father, I understand through my own personal experience the difficulty of authority, how it will often work counterintuitive to my benefit. It will work to undermine me. But yet, God, I can understand and submit to You in your wisdom, in the place that you have placed me. And I could submit to your authority, understanding that your knowledge is infinite, understanding that your wisdom is perfect, and you have set all things in order to bring us to the place that you have called us to be. So, Lord, I ask that as we face authority this week, give us the willingness to stop, to think, to pray, to submit, and listen to the Holy Spirit as you lead and guide us into all perfection. We thank you for it in Jesus' name. Amen.