

5 Marks – The Authority of God

8/16/20

Matthew 28:16-20

Sunday AM

If you're just joining us, we're in what I believe is the most critical series for any professing Christian to understand if they're going to successfully follow Jesus and live a life pleasing to the Lord – **5 Marks**

- A readiness to be **AVAILABLE** to God
- A heart that has an **AFFECTION** for God
- A desire to submit to the **AUTHORITY** of God
- An ambition to live for the **AGENDA** of God
- A willingness to rest in the **ASSURANCE** of God

We find these **5 Marks** in **Matthew 28:16-20** where Jesus offers a final word of instruction to His disciples.

The disciples ¹went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw Him, they ²worshiped Him; but some doubted. Then Jesus said to them, “All ³authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, ⁴go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and H.S. and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. Surely, ⁵I am w/ you always, to the very end of the age.”

Today, as we continue our *deeper dive* into these marks, we're going to look at what it means to – **submit to the authority of God.**

As I was studying the idea of living under the authority of God, I came across a funny story about a gov. surveyor charged w/ going into the hollows of KY to survey farmland in search of mineral/oil rights. As you can imagine, the farmers weren't too keen on his visit. At one farm, the farmer was putting up a valiant fight, until the surveyor pulled out his official paperwork and told the farmer that he had full gov. authority to go wherever he wanted/needed and if the farmer didn't cooperate that he could be fined or taken to jail. Seemingly giving in, the farmer opened his gate to allow the surveyor into his pasture. But as the surveyor was setting up his equipment, the farmer went to the opposite end of the field and released his biggest, most vicious bull. Of course, w/in minutes, the bull had cornered the surveyor – and running/screaming for his life, the farmer yelled, “Show him your paperwork. He'll care about your authority as much as I do.”

To be sure, when the Jesus spoke of His authority, He was speaking not only of His sovereign Lordship and ability, but also of our accessibility to His authority.

All authority in heaven/earth has been given to me...

I The **AUTHORITY** of Jesus

authority (*exousia*) having the freedom/right to act and speak as one pleases b/c of their earned position. It includes having both the **might/right** to do whatever is wanted/needed.

Meaning – *In this moment, Jesus was declaring that b/c of who He was (God) and b/c of what He had done on the cross, He possessed supreme dominion and sovereignty over all things w/ the right to use this power whenever, wherever, and however He wants.*

Jesus was claiming his absolute sovereignty over the creation. He was telling His followers that there's no limit/restriction to what He can do and why He can do it. There's no area outside of His sovereign, universal authority – thus He alone possesses absolute power and the right to exercise this authority as He wills.

B/c Jesus died for sin and rose from the grave, He has triumphed over sin/death, guilt/shame – over Satan and all demonic forces, and "*God has exalted Him and given Him a name that's above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow in heaven/earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father.*" Which is just another way of saying: "*All authority in heaven/earth has been given to Me.*"

He showed authority over **NATURE** – When He spoke creation into existence, when He walked on water and calmed the storm.

He showed authority over **DISEASE** – by giving *sight* to the blind, *sound* to the deaf, *stamina* to the lame, and *skin* to the leper.

He showed authority over the **DEMONIC** – by overcoming Satan in the wilderness, by closing the mouths of demons, and by casting demons into swine.

He showed authority over **SIN** – When He gave grace to the woman in adultery – He said, "*Where are your accusers? Neither do I accuse you. Go... sin no more.*"

What we learn in Scripture is that Jesus, and no one else – possesses all authority. He not only has authority over Satan/the demonic, but also over the angelic; over all creation – over natural laws, objects, and forces – over the sun, moon, stars, planets – over gravity, thermodynamics, and the weather. He has authority over the molecular – over protons, neutrons, electrons, quantum physics, and DNA; authority over all things living – plants, animals, the fish in the sea and mankind; over disease, bacteria, viruses, parasites, and germs; over every heartbeat, every breath, every electrical jump across a mil. brain synapses; He has authority over the nations, presidents, kings and legislatures – over courts/justice, armies/wars. ***Jesus has authority over every soul and every moment of every life that's ever been or will be.***

Let that soak in – so when Jesus said, "*I possess all authority in heaven/earth*" – He was saying that He alone has been imbued w/ all power *for one purpose* – to accomplish the will of the Father. **Don't Miss** – When He said, "*I have all authority in heaven/earth,*" He was ***implying*** to us (2) things:

- B/c He alone possesses this authority due to His person and work on the cross – that what He was about to command they were to obey in every way.
- The only way they'd be able to fulfill this command would be thru His power/authority which He was making *accessible* to them if they'd abide in Him.

This is huge – ginormous! B/c of who He is and what He's done, Jesus possesses absolute, sovereign authority to rule/do as He pleases. And He pleases to empower His people to go to the nations to live/proclaim the good news of His death, burial, and resurrection that everyone might hear the good news and come into a relationship w/ Him.

II Our **ACCESS** to His Authority

Access to His power only comes by way of the ministry of H.S. It begins w/ salvation and continues in our daily surrender and alignment w/ the H.S..

Abide in me, as I also Abide in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:4-5

Whether you know this or not – *or have accepted this truth or not...* independently of God, **we're all powerless/impotent to do anything to impress Him.**

Why? B/c God isn't impressed w/ what our *flesh* can do/accomplish. He's only moved by w/ what He can do in/thru us by the H.S.

This is why Isaiah wrote – *All of our righteous deeds are like filthy garments...* meaning that in our human power, ability, and ingenuity – we can do nothing to impress/help God. So, God came up w/ a better plan. **Instead of us operating under our limited power, He wants us to operate in His limitless power/authority.**

Consider **Luke 9:1-2** – When Jesus called and sent the 12 out in pairs in His name. Luke says Jesus – *gave them power/authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.*

Notice – He didn't send them out in *their* ability but in His ability. He gave them His **power** (*dunamos*) and His **authority** (*exousia*) so that they'd have the *might* needed to do it and the *right* (authority) to use it.

At Pentecost, Jesus did the same – *But you will receive power (dunamos) when the H.S. comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.* Acts 1:8

We don't go into the world w/ our power – it won't work. Thus, suffice to say, God never intended for the Christian life to be powered by you/me but by the H.S. dwelling in us and living thru us.

Imagine that the power you possess w/in your flesh is a **9-volt battery**. Do you have *some* power? Yes... but not much! Maybe enough to power a pocket radio or smoke alarm, but you're powerless to crank a car or power a jet. **You have limited power.** The same is true for us spiritually. We might have some human ability, but life and the G.C. can only be powered by the dynamic energy of the H.S. Our lives are the **conduit** by which God accomplishes His will in/thru us.

HOW – Jesus' authority resides in us in the H.S. who indwells us at the point of salvation and fills us in our daily surrender. As we submit to His guiding presence, and align our lives to His will/Word – we are allowing the H.S. to be released in us to work thru us.

Let me explain how this works – Suppose you go to Best Buy to buy a refrigerator. As your browsing, you find the mack-daddy of refrigerators. Built-in TV, individual cooling zones – it has all the bells/whistle and more. And despite that it cost more than a normal fridge, you buy it anyway b/c of its features. Of course, once it's been delivered, you stock it w/ groceries and go about your business. But then something happens. Hours later, when you go to get a snack, you discover the milk has spoiled, the ice cream has melted, and water from the ice maker is leaking onto the floor – your new refrigerator isn't working. So, you call Best Buy for help and the employee asks you to put your ear to the fridge to see if you can hear the hum of the motor – but there's no hum. He asks you to open the door to see if there's a light inside – but there's no light. So, he has you to pull the fridge away from the wall to see if it is plugged in – and it is not. But instead of accepting it, you say, "But this is a \$5K refrigerator. It ought to work whether it's plugged in or not. To which the employee says, "It doesn't matter if it cost \$5/\$5K, all refrigerators are dependent appliances relying on an invisible, outside power source known as electricity to ensure it works. Unless you plug in that cord, your food will continue to spoil.

Based on Jesus' words to His disciples in **John 15** – as Jesus followers, we're absolutely dependent on the H.S. to power our lives. **Our spiritual lives will not work unless they're plugged into the H.S.** which requires our submission to God's will, Word, and way.

Meaning – The Christian life isn't something I do in my ability/power – it can only be lived by allowing God's ability/power to work in/thru me. My job is to live submitted and under the influence of the H.S.

It also means I don't possess this power to wield as I please, but that in submitting/aligning myself under His authority, my life becomes a conduit of His power.

Example – **lamp**. I can have a lamp w/ a working light bulb – but unless the lamp is plugged into a power source, the lamp will never produce light. In the same way, unless my life is connected to the power source of the H.S., His power will not flow into/thru me.

Let me say it another way – the Christian life does not work independently of the H.S. You can search the Scripture from Genesis to Revelation, and you will quickly discover there's not one place in the Bible where God says believers can live independently of the H.S., relying on their own talents, abilities, ingenuity, or intellect? Not one!

God empowers us to do His will. What we can never forget is that God will never, ever empower us to NOT do His will.

Thus, for the Christian life to be the Christian life, it requires that we walk in-step w/ the H.S. at all times. It means we live in His authority, under His influence, and in accordance w/ His will/Word. This is what it means to ABIDE!

The amazing thing is – if we will abide in Christ by living under His authority and in alignment w/ His will – God will empower us and will make us **adequate** for His service.

III Our **ADEQUACY** Due to His Authority

Two milk cows were eating grass when a milk truck drove by w/ a sign reading, “Fresh milk. Fortified. Homogenized. Pasteurized. Vitamin-enriched.” After reading the descriptions, one cow said to the other, “It kinda makes you feel inadequate, doesn't it?”

Can you imagine how **inadequate** the disciples must have felt when they heard this command? I can just imagine Peter saying, “*But Lord, we're just 11 ordinary men – we have no money, no means, and not real ability to fulfill this calling. We might be able to make a dent here in the Galilee, but I'm not so sure we can impact the nations? How can we stand before the might of the Rome or argue w/ the intellectualism of the Greeks? Lord, we can't do it!*”

And Jesus replied, “You're right! You can't, but I can thru you! You can't, but I'll go w/ and before you. That's why I'm giving you my power/authority.”

As we go – we're not going in the name of SBC or in our own name; we're going in His name – and w/ His authority and power.

We're not going in our ability/adequacy, but in His ability/adequacy. When we submit to His authority, and allow His presence/power to be released in/thru our lives – the H.S. is released to do what only He can do – change lives!

I know I've asked this before, but I think it deserves to be asked again. What is my role in the G.C. and in the work of the Kingdom? Is it to **convict** people? No! Is it to **convince** people? No! Is it to **convert** people? No! All of this is the work of the H.S. My role is to go to **convey** the truth in what I say and in how I live under the influence and in alignment w/ the H.S.

The reason we take up the mantle of the G.C. is b/c we have become convinced Jesus was who He said He was and did what He said He'd do – and b/c of this, we love Him w/ all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength. And b/c we love Him, we submit to His authority and plug into His power – so that we can go into the world to accomplish His mission/mandate.

True belief/faith will always turn into **surrender**. True surrender most often turns into **worship**. True worship can't help but to turn into **submission**, and submission has no choice but to become **service**.

His authority on earth allows us to dare to go to all the nations. His authority in heaven gives us our only hope of success. And His presence w/ us leaves us no other choice. John Stott