

## Restore Small Group Questions - The Passion of Jesus - "The Authority of Jesus – Challenged" - 4/13/2025

It is likely we have all experienced the frustration of having our 'authority' challenged as a 'leader, boss, parent or in sports. Jesus even had His authority misunderstood, questioned, ignored and fought against yet, He allowed this to happen. BIG IDEA: - While there is still time left for each of us on earth, you and I have the opportunity (or choice) to misunderstand, question, ignore and to fight against Jesus authority....but when the end comes, **everyone** will submit to Jesus authority. Our exploration of scripture in this message focuses on the fact that Jesus authority was misunderstood, questioned, ignored, fought against and in the end, submitted to. Each will be examined here in the gospels and letters of Matthew, Mark, and Luke and Paul.

### **I - Jesus' Authority Misunderstood -**

**Matthew 21:18-22 - Jesus Curses a Fig Tree** - 18 Early in the morning, as Jesus was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. 19 Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered. 20 When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked. 21 Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. 22 If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

- **Jesus Calms the Storm - Matthew 8:23-27** — 23 Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. 24 Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. 25 The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" 26 He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. 27 The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"
- **Jesus Calls the Fish - Luke 5:8-9** - 8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" 9 For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken,
- **Jesus Walks on Water - Matthew 14:29-33** - "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" 32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

**Key Points: MISUNDERSTOOD** - Despite spending 3+ years with Jesus, the apostles, although submitted to Jesus authority, still had a lack of understanding of and faith in Jesus authority as illustrated in the story of the fig tree. The apostles also experienced Jesus authority over creation as He calmed the storm, called the fish to the net, and walked on water. How many times have we seen God move, God provide and God do the miraculous yet not fully understand or worry whether He will come through or not.

The irony in this is ‘creation’ recognizes, understands and submits to Jesus authority yet at times we are clueless to the breadth and depth of His authority. Let us not assume we know, no matter how long we have been following Jesus.

## **II - Jesus’ Authority Questioned -**

**Matthew 21:23-27 [Mark 11:27-33; Luke 20:1-8]** - 23 Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you this authority?” 24 Jesus replied, “I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 25 John’s baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?” They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ 26 But if we say, ‘Of human origin’—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” 27 So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.” Then he said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

**Key Points: QUESTIONED** - Jesus had the audacity to enter the temple courts to teach in the authority He carried with Him yet, His authority was questioned by the religious leaders. The irony again is that the religious leaders should have rejoiced at the Messiah’s coming and God’s help, hope and healing....but they didn’t because: (1) the message was not their message, (2) the message was winning the masses, (3) Jesus teaching challenged THEIR authority, (4) Jesus authority was a disrupter to religious authority and (5) they refused to submit to Jesus.

- Jesus authority is also a disrupter to OUR authority, autonomy, and sufficiency to include OUR money, calendar, sexuality, comfort, thought life, and whom we forgive. Jesus needs to ‘steal the show’ of our lives. Jesus desires that we willingly submit to His authority

## **III - Jesus’ Authority Ignored -**

**Matthew 21:28-32** - 28 “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’ 29 “‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. 30 “Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go. 31 “Which of the two did what his father wanted?” “The first,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.”

**Key Points: IGNORED** - The parable of the man with two sons highlights the opposition to authority by ignoring and having no intention of doing what is asked. We can be serving in a ministry right now and be ignoring the authority of Jesus in our life. Are you ignoring Jesus authority to rearrange certain priorities in your life? If you continue to question and ignore God’s authority, it will ultimately lead to fighting against God’s authority.

## **IV - Jesus’ Authority Fought Against -**

**Matthew 21:33-46 [Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19]** - 33 “Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers

and moved to another place. 34 When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit. 35 "The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. 36 Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. 37 Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said. 38 "But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' 39 So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. 40 "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" 41 "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time." 42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes' 43 "Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. 44 Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed." 45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. 46 They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

**Key Points: FOUGHT AGAINST** - The parable of the vineyard owner depicts a fight against the authority of the owner by those who rented the vineyard. The judgment of the owner against those who rebelled against his authority as owner of the vineyard was severe and permanent....they would be 'broken to pieces and crushed'.

- For us, fighting with the authority of God can come in a couple of ways"
  - We will not be obedient to God in some area of our life and/or God's response to a stubborn heart can come in the form of persecution

#### **V- Jesus Authority Submitted To -**

**Matthew 22:1-14** - Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. 4 "Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.' 5 "But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. 6 The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. 7 The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. 8 "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. 9 So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' 10 So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12 He asked, 'How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?' The man was speechless. 13 "Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 14 "For many are invited, but few are chosen."

- **Philippians 2:9-11** - *After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.*

**Key Points: SUBMISSION TO JESUS AUTHORITY** - The parable of the wedding banquet illustrates that while God allows you and I time on earth to misunderstand, question, ignore, fight against His authority OR willingly submit to His authority....However, there will come a time when God will say ....TIME'S UP!!! And when time is up, there will be no further choice....Jesus authority will be submitted to regardless of your choice!! The guy that didn't 'change clothes' for the wedding (i.e. REPENT) suffered the ultimate judgment for not submitting to authority and as Paul said: "every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus Christ is Lord".

**CONCLUSION** - Choose this day to NOT rudely question, ignore or fight Jesus authority....But to choose TO submit to His authority. We are admonished to pick up our cross DAILY and follow Him and continue to LEARN from Him. Humility and teachability extends to us all to have purpose, fulfillment and hope.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS** -

1. When we are confronted with the 'TRUTH' of Jesus authority, what are our choices? Do we acknowledge it or avoid it? What are some areas of resistance or traps that undermine His authority over us?
2. What are the implications of the supremacy of Jesus Christ in our lives? How important is understanding His supremacy to our belief, faith and salvation?
3. When confronted with Jesus authority it means yielding control of our own lives. How do you respond when Jesus' authority challenges your own desires or plans? Are you willing to submit to Him as Lord (in all things), even when it disrupts your comfort or understanding?
4. The religious leader's fear of the crowd outweighed their fear of God. How do we let the opinions of others determine our response to God. What are some areas where we are tempted to please people rather than submit to God's authority? Consider how the fear of man might be influencing our decisions in today's culture.
5. When we resist or avoid God's truth and authority, we miss out on deeper revelation and understanding. What can we do to create a receptive heart to enhance spiritual growth and intimacy with God.
6. What role does humility play in our reception of Jesus' authority?
7. When Jesus was "Questioned" about His source of authority, Jesus responded with a counter-question that confounded the leaders. (Matthew 21: 23-27). Essentially, Jesus question is also directed at us....."What will you do with Jesus"? Discuss the implications of the possible answers. How does it relate to the spiritual battle between truth and unbelief.
8. Why do you think your family members, friends, spouse, children, or grandchildren, etc. resist or ignore Jesus authority? Be honest in your discussion because salvation is in the balance for those that reject Jesus. Discuss how fear, cost, pride, etc. factor into their rejection.