

"The Authority of Jesus"  
 Mark 11:27-33  
 (Preached at Trinity, October 30, 2013)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. This passage is a follow-up to our Lord's cleansing of the Temple. Jesus has entered the Temple on Sunday evening after the triumphal entry into Jerusalem and again on Monday morning when He cleansed the Temple. Now it is Tuesday morning and He again enters the Temple. He is surrounded by people and pauses to teach them and He walks further and He finds Himself surrounded by people again.
2. He is confronted by the religious leaders:  
**Mark 11:27-28 NAU** - "And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to Him, <sup>28</sup> and *began* saying to Him, "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?"  
**Matthew 21:23 NAU** - "When He entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him while He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things, and who gave You this authority?"
3. "These things" could have pointed to many things: His entrance into Jerusalem with all of the fanfare, His teaching, His healing, but most likely the cleansing of the Temple. It was an audacious act to overthrow the tables and throw people out of the Temple.
4. It is interesting to note that they could not deny His authority. They questioned the source of His authority; they were threatened by it and jealous of it, but they could not deny it.
5. Once again it was an attempt to embarrass Jesus. If He claimed no authority then He would be discredited and lose favor with the people. If He claimed that He had the authority to do the things He had been doing He would have been claiming rights that belonged only to God – this would have been blasphemy.
6. Jesus knew the hardness of their hearts. They were not at all seeking to know the truth. He knew their question was meant to trap Him. He dealt with them as He deals with all who reject the truth. He left them in their blindness by answering their question with a question that would expose their wickedness.  
**Mark 11:29 NAU** - "And Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and *then* I will tell you by what authority I do these things."  
 A. Jesus' question drove them into a corner. If they said John's baptism was from heaven then they should have submitted, but if it was merely from man . . . well, they didn't dare say this for John had many followers and they knew him to be a prophet of God.  
 B. They had only one option—to claim ignorance.
7. There are several truths we can glean from this passage.

- I. First, we can see the great responsibility of those charged with teaching God's people.
- A. These were Israel's teachers
1. They were demonstrating their own incompetence as the leaders of God's people. They should have known the truth about Jesus. It was their responsibility to know. They should have been teaching the people about Jesus.
  2. All of the OT Scriptures pointed to Jesus  
**John 5:39-40 NAU** - "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; <sup>40</sup> and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life."
  3. They were the guides for the people. When the teachers are blind, then all the people stumble in darkness.  
**Matthew 15:14 NAU** - "Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."
  4. They are held at a high accountability. Jesus could have turned the question back upon them. By what authority do YOU make yourself a teacher of God's people?
- B. The same is still true of the teachers of God's people
1. James gave a warning  
**James 3:1 NAU** - "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment."
  2. No one has the right to declare himself to be a pastor.  
Matthew Henry – "But this is indeed a question, which all that act either as magistrates or ministers, ought to be furnished with a good answer to, and often put to themselves, *By what authority do I these things? For how can men preach except they be sent?*"
  3. With this authority comes great responsibility  
Teachers have a duty to study long and hard to know the truth.  
Paul told Timothy  
**1 Timothy 4:6 NAU** - "In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, *constantly* nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following."
    - a. Biblical knowledge demands study
    - b. The excellent Pastor continually feeds upon the Word of God  
The word "nourished up" comes from a compound Greek word  
ἐντρέφω  
ἐν – preposition of various uses (in, on, at, by, with, among)  
τρέφω – feed, nourish, bring up  
Literally: to feed on – A Pastor must continually feed on the Word of God
  4. I have a greater accountability than Pastor Rob or Pastor Chad  
**1 Timothy 5:17 NAU** - "The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching."

- II. The second thing we see is the great danger of hardening your heart against the truth
- A. An honest answer to Jesus' question would have pointed them to the truth.
1. John proclaimed One as greater than himself.  
**Mark 1:7-8 NAU** - "After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals. <sup>8</sup> "I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."
  2. An honest answer would have pointed them to the truth. If John was sent from God then the one greater than John must have had authority given by God. The honest conclusion would have been, John's Baptism was from heaven, he declared Christ as the Messiah, the authority of Christ is from heaven – BOW DOWN.
  3. They hardened themselves against the truth. Their blindness kept them from the truth  
**2 Timothy 3:7** – "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."
- B. Preconceived ideas will often lead to wrong conclusions
1. In some ways we always approach the Scriptures with certain preconceived ideas.
    - a. We presuppose it to be the Word of God, infallible, and absolute truth.
    - b. We presuppose a Biblical theology. In other words, there is a consistent teaching throughout Scripture.
  2. We must guard zealously against eisegesis – imposing our own presuppositions, biases, or agendas upon Scripture.
    - a. The Jewish religious leaders had concluded that Jesus was a fraud. They had already decided that He was possessed of Satan.  
**Mark 3:22 NAU** - "The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."
    - b. Rather than searching the Scriptures to see if He could be the promised Messiah they hardened themselves to the truth.
  3. Paul admonishes us:  
**2 Timothy 2:15 NAU** - "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."
  4. For example, we must not blindly believe the doctrine of particular redemption without a careful study of the Biblical text. Many, however, reject this truth outright by reading into certain passages while ignoring the all encompassing Biblical theology of God's redemptive purpose.
  5. Many fail to come to a knowledge of the truth because they will not submit to the truth.
    - a. William Hendriksen quotes in his commentary – "An increasing knowledge of divine truth is conditioned upon humble submission of the heart and the will, to what has already been revealed" (NT Commentary on Mark, page 467, quoting C.R. Erdman).

- b. Paul warned of some:  
**2 Timothy 3:7 NAU** - "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

III. Thirdly, what then was the source of Jesus' power?

**Mark 11:28 NAU** - "By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?"

A. In His deity He possessed all power

1. Jesus was God. He possessed all power from all eternity
2. Jesus was the Creator and sustainer of all things

**Colossians 1:16-17 NAU** - "For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."

3. As the Sovereign King Jesus rules all things with all Divine authority

B. In His humiliation, however, all power was given to Jesus by the Father to carry out His mediatorial work.

**John 5:25-27 NAU** - "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. <sup>26</sup> "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; <sup>27</sup> and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man."

**Matthew 28:18 NAU** - "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

1. How foolish it is to resist the authority of Christ

**Psalms 2:12 ESV** - "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him."

2. Jesus crushed His enemies on the cross. His enemies are being made His footstool

3. Jesus has returned His throne of majesty and glory.

**Philippians 2:9-11 NAU** - "God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Conclusion:

1. Jesus possesses all power, dominion, and authority. Our duty is to bow and submit.
2. The day will come when every human being will come before Him in judgment.
3. How glorious it is to serve such a mighty King as this who looks upon us with such tender love and mercy.