

**Matthew 7:28,29**  
**The Authority of the Preacher**  
*He taught them as one having authority... v. 29*

These last two verses which describe the impact of the Lord's sermon do much more than simply stamp an epilogue to the sermon on the mount. If we rightly understand these two verses then we'll realize at once that this sermon needs to rise in our estimation of its truth and value above any other sermon we've ever heard or read. When you think of the great preachers throughout the course of church history and you contemplate their sermons you are certainly able to say that you benefit from them. It's good to read the sermons of the great men of the past but you still have to conclude that none of their sermons are like this sermon that we've spent several Lord's Days studying.

Charles Spurgeon could not preach this sermon. George Whitefield could not preach this sermon – Nor could Jonathan Edwards or John Wesley or Calvin or Luther or any of the Reformers or Puritans. Now they could and did preach from this sermon the way I've been preaching from it for a number of weeks. But there's a great difference between preaching from this sermon and actually preaching the sermon the way Christ did.

And had you been on hand to actually hear Christ preach this sermon you would have been forced to come to one of two possible conclusions. You would either have to conclude that this man was a serious imposter and a flagrant usurper of authority or you would have to conclude that you had just listened to a sermon that was preached by God Himself – God having come in the flesh – the Son of God.

It's no wonder that we read that *when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine*. The word *astonish* is an interesting word. One of the definitions assigned to it is *to be struck with amazement*. Another definition that is a little more graphic is *to expel by a blow*. In other words you might say that Christ delivered a knock-out punch. He floored His hearers.

And then we're told in the next verse why He floored His hearers and this provides us with an important key to this entire sermon. It does not say that they were astonished at His doctrine because the truth which had been buried for so long was now at last brought to the light again. That was undoubtedly true but it's not the primary reason the hearers of this sermon were so amazed.

Nor does it say that they were amazed merely by His superior scholarship. He was obviously wiser than others – He is, after all, omniscient but had the text said something to that effect it would have registered the crowd's reaction as making Christ a superior scribe and as v. 29 indicates Christ was way beyond that kind of classification.

No, we're told rather that they were amazed or astonished by His doctrine because He taught them *as one having authority*. What this epilogue does, then, is to show the very close connection between the sermon that was preached and the person that preached it. And it's by coming face to face with the person who preached it that we come to learn how

elevated this sermon is above any other sermon you've heard or will hear. And it's important for us to understand who it was that preached this sermon. What I'd like to do this morning, then, is to focus now on the preacher of the sermon on the mount. We've studied His sermon, now in order to come to grips with the importance of this sermon we need to appreciate the One who delivered it. And so I'd like you to consider with me:

## What This Sermon Reveals About Christ

### I. It Reveals His Claim to Our Loyalty and Allegiance

Would you notice with me the last beatitude back in back in chp. 5:11 *Blessed are ye, when [men] shall revile you, and persecute [you], and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.* Underscore the words *for my sake.*

The reviling and persecution and malicious slander that is here predicted by Christ as the portion of His followers is on account of Christ. In other words – if Christ is not a part of your life neither will there be reviling and persecution. If Christ is not a part of your life then you can be at peace within a world that is offended by Christ, a world that scorns the idea that salvation is by grace through faith. On the other hand if Christ is not a part of your life then you'll also know nothing of the blessing that is promised in this beatitude.

We see, then, what is presupposed by this statement of Christ. It is presupposed that He is the head of our loyalty and allegiance and that we will endure whatever the world sees fit to throw at us because of that loyalty and allegiance. And when you look back down the corridor of church history then you discover the ones who gave their lives to Christ quite literally. They're described for us near the end of Heb. 11 where we read beginning in v. 36 – *And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.*

They endured these things why? – they endured them for Christ's sake. They endured them because they knew and appreciated what Christ had done for them. Chp. 5:11 of the sermon on the mount presents to us Christ's first reference to Himself. It would have been easy for His hearers, I suppose, to listen to the beatitudes and to remark on how sublime they sounded. There was and is, after all, a certain poetic quality to them. You see that quality even today by the publications that will take the beatitudes and print them over the backdrop of some scenic photographs. Such publications attempt to enhance the these sayings of Christ but don't really show any knowledge of their meaning.

When you come to this last, beatitude, however, now all of a sudden the preacher is inserting Himself into the message and revealing Himself to be the One who lays claim to the loyalty and allegiance of His followers. This statement *for my sake* shows us, then, that Christ is no ordinary preacher and that Christ does not merely stand out from the scribes

by demonstrating deeper knowledge or greater literary forms of expression. He stands out, rather, as One that would be at the very heart of His followers. They would endure for His sake. He would be the object of their love. He would become their all in all to the point that they would love not their own lives even unto death (Rev. 12:11). You begin, to see, I trust, the meaning of our text – *He taught them as one having authority.*

In the very next verse in chp. 5 we see His authority asserted again. In v. 13, still on the subject of that last beatitude He says *Rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven.* This verse reveals to us the authority of Christ is distribute His rewards. This authority is also asserted in chp. 6 where, speaking of those who engage in their religion in order to impress men, Christ says in v. 5 and again in v. 16 *verily I say unto you* – there's the assertion of His authority – *verily I say unto you.* He doesn't say, as the scribes would have said – *verily some famous Rabbi of the past has said* or *verily some contemporary scholar has said.* Christ says *verily I say unto you they have their reward.*

It's not hard to see, then, why His hearers were astonished. To those who believed in Him His sayings would be consistent with who He had revealed Himself to be. And I should note here that by this time in Christ's earthly ministry He had already vindicated His identity many times through various miracles. The setting for this sermon is given to us at the end of chp. 4 where we read in v. 24 *And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. 25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan.*

The astonishment of those who believed in Him would have been the astonishment of wonder and awe. This One who done these miracles was now asserting His authority. To those whose hearts were hard and refused to believe in Him, in spite of what they saw – their astonishment would have been the astonishment of offense. It would have seemed preposterous to them that anyone would bear reviling and persecution for the sake of a carpenter's son from Nazareth. *Who is this person that presumes to claim our loyalty and allegiance* they would have reasoned. *What arrogance this young man is manifesting by suggesting that we'll be persecuted for His sake and we'll be rewarded in heaven on account of that persecution.*

I wonder this morning what kind of astonishment characterizes your heart and life? Are you able to say with the hymn-writer – *That Man of Calvary – Has won my heart from me, And died to set me free, Blest Man of Calvary.* We see, then, that this sermon reveals Christ's claim to our loyalty and allegiance. There's good reason for Him to lay claim to our loyalty and allegiance for we see next that:

## II. It Reveals His Authority to Represent Us

I love every excuse to bring to your attention what is in my estimation the key to this entire sermon in terms of the gospel. So we read again in Mt 5:17 *Think not that I am come*

*to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.* In the verses that follow this statement we find Christ asserting His authority to interpret the law. And once again He stands out from what would have been the common practice of the scribes.

The scribes would have drawn from their studies and quoted the sources that they esteemed most highly in their expositions of the law. Christ sets Himself above the scribes and their sources when He says over and over again *ye have heard...but I say unto you.* And in the course of these statements we have seen that Christ shows how high the standard of the law actually was and how deeply the law of God penetrated, weighing not merely the actions but the thoughts and intents of the heart.

When you keep in mind this high standard then you can appreciate how bold this claim is by Christ that He Himself would fulfil the law. He would not merely fulfil the ceremonial law in the form of all those animal sacrifices that pointed to Him but He would fulfil the moral law as well. We, of course, have the benefit of the epistles when it comes to our understanding of this statement. And in particular we have the benefit of Paul's statements where twice in his writings – in Rom. 5 and in 1Cor. 15 he makes reference to Christ being the second Adam.

And so we the second Adam taking on the obligations where the first Adam failed. And what was the obligation of Adam? It was the obligation to obey or the obligation to fulfil the law. We see Christ, then, making this bold statement that He would fulfil what no mortal man had ever done. He would render perfect obedience and He would do this as our Federal Head.

And in the gospels we have the record of Christ accomplishing what He boldly said He would do. In the mount of transfiguration we hear the testimony of His Father that He's pleased with Him which indicates to us that Christ was successful in making good on His bold claim. And when we behold Him risen from the dead then we know that He made good on His claim in life and in death to fulfil the law and for that reason the grave could not hold Him and for that reason also our salvation was secured.

Do we not have cause to be astonished this morning – or to be moved to wonder and awe when we hear the claim of Christ in this sermon that He would fulfil the law and then we hear Him giving substance to His claim by interpreting the law and showing us its high standard and then we see Him in His earthly ministry making good on that claim – a claim that would bring Him first to the grave through the cross and then bring Him triumphantly out of the grave again? If His hearers were amazed at His doctrine and His authority, how much more should we be amazed who are able to view His sermon in the broader context of the entire word of God?

So this sermon reveals His claim to our loyalty and allegiance. It reveals that claim by revealing to us the very purpose for which Christ came into this world. He came as our Covenant Head to represent us and to fulfil the law that we've failed to fulfil and have transgressed many times. He came to fulfil the law in its precept, in its penalty and in all that the ceremonial law pictures. Would you consider with me next that:

### III. This Sermon Reveals Christ's Willingness to Take Care of Us

Notice with me another assertion of Christ's authority found in Mt 6:25 *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?*

And again underscore the phrase *I say unto you*. This is the kind of statement that would have to be viewed as ludicrous were it said by anyone of lesser stature than Christ. How many scenes in life have you beheld in which a person may be facing strenuous challenges. His means are meager – perhaps he's lost his job. His age or his health may be such that it would be difficult for him to find work – to say nothing of a faltering economy where jobs are scarce even for men and women in their prime.

Along comes a friend who hears of the difficulties of such a person and he tries to console him by saying to him – *there, there, I just know that everything will be all right. I can just feel it*. What a hollow expression! What a meaningless statement! It makes you wonder how many men and women have gone to early graves while those around them sensed that everything would turn out to be all right.

If you or I are to be free from worry – free from the cares of life – then we have to have the kind of assurance that could only come from One who had the power and authority to watch over us, One who is able and willing to protect and provide. We see in this setting also another manifestation of Christ's authority. He says in v. 26 that our heavenly Father feeds the fowls of the air that sow not or reap. He goes on to say that we are of much better value than the fowls of the air.

We see in this statement the authority of Christ to speak for His Father. He's making reference to what God the Father will do. God will clothe you and God will feed you and God will take care of you. This authority is also asserted earlier in chp. 6 as well. In vv. 14,15 we read *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*.

Christ, then, has the authority to say what His Father will or will not do. He also has the authority to identify His followers as being those that belong to His Father. What consolation we can draw, then, from the One who preached the sermon on the mount. The same One who tells His followers not to worry but to have faith – the same One tells His followers to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness is also the same One who showed that He rules over nature. He's the One who stilled the stormy sea. He's the One that cast out demons. He's the One that healed multitudes. He obviously has the authority to rule over nature – to rule over sickness – to rule over the spiritual world and to rule over kings and nations.

Oh that our confidence would be strong this morning in the One who preached the sermon on the mount – that our confidence would be strong in the words that He spoke

and in the promises He has given. Our motivation to strive for the standards of this sermon will, at the end of the day, be governed by our estimation of the One who preached this sermon. May we come to see and appreciate, therefore, the things that this sermon reveals to us about Christ.

There is one more indication of Christ's authority found in this sermon. We must consider, before we're through that:

#### IV. This Sermon Reveals Christ's Authority to Judge

We have studied the last portion of this sermon in recent weeks. The thing I want to draw your attention to now is what Christ says in v. 22 – *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name...*

This statement shows us Christ on the throne. The nations are gathered unto Him. Individuals are giving accounts of their lives to Him. They're pleading with Him *Lord, Lord*. What such a statement indicates to us, then, is that it is the Judge of the world that is preaching this sermon. The One who has authority to receive sinners into heaven or to cast sinners into hell is the One delivering the sermon on the mount. Wouldn't you agree that the knowledge of His authority should prompt us to give diligent heed to every word He speaks?

It sort of makes me wonder if I would have done better to begin our studies of this sermon with this epilogue rather than close the sermon with these words. In the common day to day routines of life you may listen to sermons, you will come to church and listen to an ordinary preacher try his best to preach a sermon and then you may go home and feed your soul some more by reading Spurgeon or a sermon from some other great preacher of the past.

Imagine what your heart response would be if you could somehow know in advance that next week you would hear a sermon from One who had the authority to call for your strongest loyalty and allegiance – One who represented you as your Covenant Head and your substitute – One who had power over all creation and who ruled over all the nations – the One who really is responsible for the climates of the world and the One before whom you will stand on the day of judgment.

What would your heart response be to the prospect of hearing such an one as this deliver a sermon? I dare say you would be ready in advance. You would make sure you were well rested – you would want to be to church early to get as close a seat as possible to such a preacher. And you would do your utmost to pay attention and give careful heed to every word this preacher delivered. You would go over His sermon again and again to be sure you had it right.

Maybe that's why this epilogue is at the end of the sermon. Maybe the Divine intention of the Holy Ghost is that you never go too far away from this sermon. We're about to conclude our studies of it but it would be a big mistake to think that we should be through with it.

And so the chapter ends by stamping this sermon with the stamp of Divine approval by reminding us of the impact of this sermon upon the hearers and reason for that impact. *They were astonished at his doctrine* our text tells us *For he taught them as One having authority and not as the scribes*. Like I said in my introduction – this statement ought to magnify this sermon in our estimation of its truth and value. And when you go back to read and re-read and study this sermon, as I hope you will – I hope that you'll take into careful account not just the contents of the sermon but take into account the person who preached it.

If you'll open your heart to the One who preached it then you'll come away from this sermon in somewhat the same way as those antagonists came away from Christ who were sent to arrest Him. *Never man spake like this man* they said in Jn. 7:46. The very ones that were sent to arrest Christ found themselves instead arrested by His words.

May the impact of His message be no less on your hearts. At a time later in His ministry when His sayings become too hard for many of His followers to endure and many left Him, He asked His disciples – *Will ye also go away? To whom shall we go?* Simon Peter answered *Thou hast the words of eternal life*.

May we come to perceive these sayings of Christ in that light. May we so follow the example of Christ that His words become our necessary food. His word is designed to convict us, to guide us, to uphold and sustain us. They're designed to minister comfort and hope to our souls and ultimately to draw us to Christ Himself who is the living word. May you be drawn to Him this day and in the coming days that you may be encouraged and strengthened to run hard after Him.