



Midtown Messenger

Volume 2

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Issue 43

Are You Challenging Christ's Authority?

By: Clay Bond

*I*n Matthew chapter eight we read about a Centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant. The compassionate Savior declared that He would go to the man's house and heal his servant. The Centurion's response provides an interesting commentary on the concept of authority "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it" (Matthew 8:8-9). This man understood that Jesus had the power or authority, to heal His servant even without seeing or being near him. Jesus' authority extended beyond His physical location and it still does. What Jesus has to say is important to us because it is authoritative!

During His earthly ministry the Jews constantly challenged Christ's authority. One example of this is seen when Jesus went into the temple and drove out those who were buying and selling, overturned the tables of the moneychangers and rebuked them for making His Father's house of prayer into a den of thieves (Matthew 21:12-13). The following day as Jesus taught in the temple, the chief priest and elders came to challenge Him asking, "By what authority doest thou these things and who gave thee this authority?" (Matthew 21:23). These Jewish leaders failed to see that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, did not just have some authority, He had "all authority" (Matthew 28:18)! Do we also fail to see and respect the authority of Christ? If we

do not understand the concept of "all authority" we may be just like the Jewish leaders without even realizing it.

Paul wrote "...whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus ..." (Colossians 3:17). Since Jesus has "all authority" what we practice in religion must be found in His Word. Jesus warned that if we do not have Divine authority for what we practice our worship becomes vain (Matthew 15:9). Jesus also said that true worshipers must worship the Father "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23-24). Not only must we have the right attitude when we worship God, our worship must be offered according to what God's Word says (John 17:17).

The Old Testament is filled with examples of those who acted on their own, stepping outside the authority of God's word to do what they thought was best. In each situation we see that what was done was not pleasing to God because it failed to respect His authority. Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire before the Lord, fire that was not authorized by God (Leviticus 10:1-20), Saul offered sacrifices which were not authorized by God (1 Samuel 15) and Uzzah touched the ark in violation of God's instructions (2 Samuel 6). These things are written "for our learning" to teach us the seriousness of Bible authority (Romans 15:4). When God speaks He expects us to listen and obey because "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). So much of the confusion and division in the religious world today is the result of religious practices that lack Biblical au-

thority. The truth is, all religious division is the result of human failure to respect Christ's authority over His church.

Over four hundred times in the Old Testament, particularly in the Old Law, we find an interesting phrase "thus saith the Lord." This phrase is the key to avoiding the vain worship Jesus warned about. If we have a "thus saith the Lord" for every religious practice, we can be sure that our worship is acceptable and pleasing to God. The question each of us must ask is: Do I have Christ's authority for my religious beliefs and practices?

The Pharisee's questioned Jesus' authority because His teachings did not match their traditions. Does the church you attend respect Christ's authority by teaching His plan of salvation (Romans 1:16-17), worshipping according to His pattern found in the New Testament (John 4:23-24), identifying itself by a name given in His word (Ephesians 3:15; Romans 16:16) and following the structure for the organization of the church given in His New Testament (Philippians 1:1)?

We should always be willing to examine our religious practices and change if we find that what we are doing is not authorized by Jesus Christ. Do you challenge Christ's authority, or do you comply with it? Remember Jesus "...became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

My Way Doesn't Work So Well

Submitting to someone is tough to do, and it starts early. Ask the two-year-old who looks you in the eye and defiantly grabs the forbidden cookie. Or the seventh-grader who lives by the adage that rules were meant to be broken. You've seen it in the boundary-testing behavior of the sixteen-year-old who constantly has to rediscover that mom means what she says.

And, of course, we've seen it in us, and not just back when we were kids.

It all started in the beautiful nature park of

Eden. Adam and Eve sought and found autonomy, but the fruit didn't taste as good as they'd hoped. The lie they fell for was the one that suggested they could make their own rules, that God's prohibition was rooted in his wanting to keep them from experiencing some kind of secret joy.

What they found was that deciding for themselves what was best wasn't all the snake promised. It led to shame (within themselves), conflict (with each other), and alienation (from God). Not to mention what it did for childbirth and tilling the ground.

We've struggled to submit ever since, choosing to go our own way and make our own rules. The same spirit that motivates the cookie-grabbing two-year-old animates us as well: we want to do what we want to do.

Except it doesn't work. At all.

It didn't work when Adam and Eve tried it, it didn't work with Cain, it didn't work at Babel, it won't work with us. In fact, that's one of the purposes of the Bible—to give us a thorough account of what happens when sinful people live according to their self-centered wants outside of God.

It leads to conflict, hopelessness, anxiety, rebellion, sickness, and death.

Our way isn't the best way, and even though we know that intellectually it's a hard lesson to live.

Think about this passage when You want your way:

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you" (Jam 4:7-8).

-Selected-

PRIVILEGED TO SERVE

Week of October 27, 2019

Sunday Morning:

Announcements: Jeff Harris
Scripture Reading: Fred Scherffius

Lord's Supper & Offering

Bread: Doug Jobes
Fruit of the Vine: Mark FitzSimmons
Offering: Don Lynn
Assist: Scott DeDear, Kirk FitzSimmons, Steve Randle

Sunday Evening: Doug Jobes, Mark FitzSimmons

Prayer

A.M. Closing: Mike Atkinson
P.M. Closing: Young Men

Song Leaders:

Sun. A.M.: Anthony Scherffius
Sun. P.M.: Young Men
Wednesday: Larry Nuckels

Ushers:

Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Wednesday Devotional:

Bryce Dolan

Open/Close Building:

Will Burleson

Sound System:

Bryant Siegel

Greeters:

Don Lynn
Allen Clifton

Prepare Communion:

Scherffius

TODAY: We will be having Trunk or Treat after the evening services. All are welcome to participate. There will be a devotional and pizza for kids while the adults decorate and setup their vehicles.

Sign up sheets to help knock on doors November 2nd, for our upcoming Gospel meeting are in the foyer and hallway. There is also a sign up sheet to provide food for those knocking doors. The Door Knocking will be from 8:30am—12:30p.m. on Saturday, November 2nd.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Lee FitzSimmons, who will need open heart surgery.
Ronnie Scherffius, who went to the hospital with chest pains last week.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct. 27: Trunk or Treat
Oct. 29: Men's and Ladies' Bible Class
Nov. 2—Door Knocking for our Gospel Meeting
Nov. 9: Men's Work Day and Cook Out @ 8am
Nov. 10-13: MidTown's Fall Gospel Meeting with Jason Rollo.

AREA EVENTS

Nov. 9: Bible Bowl @ Weber church of Christ
Nov. 9: Ladies' Day @ SW church of Christ in Austin.
Speaker is Carlie Bond.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:

Happy Birthday: Holden Jacobs (30)

Happy Anniversary: Phillip & Nicolette Garcia (29)

KEEP IN PRAYER

MIDTOWN MEMBERS:

Jeff Cannady
Les Daltry
Dee Gilpatrick
Wayne Martin
Ann Pantel
Veronica Serenil
Mickey Tisue
Clark Withers

SHUT-INS:

Faye Henderson
Sandy Malone

If you would like to add or remove a name on the "Keep in Prayer" List, please see Nina Siegel.

MIDTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST

Minister: Ronnie Scherffius
Secretary: Nina Siegel

TIMES OF SERVICES

Sunday Bible Class: 9:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00AM
Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00PM
Wednesday Bible Class: 7:00PM

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Week of October 20, 2019

Bible Class.....118
A.M. Worship.....140
P.M. Worship.....89
Wednesday Bible Study.....90

Offering \$3,561

Reading for this week: Luke 3-4

The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'"

Luke 4:3-4



SUPPORTED WORKS

India - Mani Pagidipalli

Bible Land Passages - John & Carla Moore

Southwest School of Bible Studies - William Pedigo

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