

April 7, 2019

One Day: Who Died And Made You Boss?

Luke 20:1-8

This morning as we continue our series, *One Day*, we are looking at another specific day in Jesus' life. And as we have journeyed with Jesus throughout these various days it is clear Jesus knew how to live each and every day to the fullest. He showed us what it is to be present in the moment, to make the most of each day, every day, one day at a time.

As we look at the days leading up to Easter, there is now a greater urgency and intentionality to what Jesus is saying and doing, as each day is one day closer to his death on the cross.

Not only that but we also see an increase in the tension and conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

Which really isn't a surprise as this is what Jesus said would happen back in Luke 9

*The Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.*

And this particular day we come to in our passage, is actually just the beginning of what would be one of Jesus' longer days. A day filled with questions and teachings and the Jewish leaders even more intent on trying to trap Jesus, and silence him.

On this day we find Jesus in the temple teaching again, just a few days after the beginning of what we now call Holy week and Jesus' grand entry into Jerusalem. Which we will go back and look at next week.

There is a crowd of people surrounding Jesus listening to his every word. If you were in the crowd that day you would most likely have noticed a strong tension in the air.

Kind of like if you have ever walked in on someone who just had an argument but they try and quickly cover it up, pretending everything is normal and fine. But you feel it... tension, so thick you can slice with a knife.

You would also notice the temple staff and Jewish leaders seem a bit edgy as they are watching and waiting, wondering what Jesus is going to do next as the previous days events are still very fresh in their minds.

As we will see next week, it was immediately following his grand entry into Jerusalem, Jesus went straight to the temple and like an episode of Extreme Home makeover, minus any happy feelings or any permission given, Jesus goes to work.

What was supposed to be a place of worship and prayer, had been turned into a corrupt system of counterfeit religion and hypocrisy. Jesus goes into cleaning mode turning over tables, kicking out the money changers and those selling stuff. He made bold statements about how they have turned his house from a place of prayer into a den of robbers. It was quite a scene.

And now Jesus is back at the temple teaching a crowd of people. And I have to wonder what was he saying? What was he teaching?

I can't say for sure but it says he was proclaiming the good news. I imagine he was speaking truth in a place that hadn't heard truth in a very long time. Speaking the good news of God's love, mercy, compassion, and salvation from sins. Speaking words of Grace and Truth contrary to the false teachings, lies, corruption and injustice the temple leaders had allowed to go on for so long.

Can you imagine the frustration and anger the Jewish leaders must be feeling at this point?

Time and time again Jesus has said things and done things that constantly undermined their authority and made them look like fools. He had become a threat to the power and system they had in place and had grown comfortable with. And every single stinking time they had come up with a clever question or way to trap him, Jesus seem to effortlessly slip away or dismantle their attack in just a word to two.

Who does he think he is?

And then to come in here, the Temple, like he owns the place, that's the final straw... They rally the troops and gather the group of temple leaders and approach Jesus.

"Tell us Jesus, by what authority do you do these things and who gave it to you?" In other words.... Who died, and made you boss?

We always used to say that growing up. I remember back in the day, on the mean streets of Philly. Ok they weren't really that bad. But we had our neighborhood group of kids. Our squad as they say today. And we would often play stick ball in the streets. Anyone know about stick ball? Think of it like baseball but instead of a bat we used broom stick and a tennis ball that we cut in half.

The streets in the city are often small with lot of houses close together and cars lining the streets. We couldn't really play baseball because you could break a window. So we played stickball.

And of course there was always that one kid in our group, who felt necessary to be the self-appointed umpire, and coach. "That's a strike!; Nope, doesn't count, it bounced off the power line; You go there! Cover that base; How bout you throw better pitches?"

Well, that didn't fly, and anytime someone got to big for their britches they were quickly put in their place with someone yelling, "who died and made you boss?"

The issue here between Jesus and the Jewish leaders and what it really all comes down to, is the issue of authority.

We recognize the importance and need of authority and at the same time many of us have seen and experiences the abuse and misuse of authority. We know what it is like to be under authority and even to have authority.

Either way, as people we tend to have somewhat of an aversion to authority as in we don't like to be told what to do, when to do it and how we should do it. And to some degree we also

question authority. Maybe not out-loud or in direct confrontation but we want to know where the authority comes from that gives you the right to say the things you do, do the things you do, and especially if you are telling me what to do or not do and how I should do it.

Imagine if I went over to John, at the beginning of the good Friday concert and started telling him how he should play the organ, direct the choir and so on? That would be quite the scene :)

During the time of Jesus there was very specific system of authority in place. No rabbi or teacher taught on their own authority. A rabbi would quote another rabbi who quoted another rabbi and so on. And all of that fell under the larger umbrella of approval and authorization by the Sanhedrin. The supreme, governing, religious body at that time.

But when Jesus taught he said things with authority. Not what rabbi so and so said or the authority of the temple leaders but on his own authority.

Luke 4:32- They were amazed at his teaching, because his words had authority.  
4:36- What words these are! With authority and power he gives orders to impure spirits and they come out!"  
5: 24: I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.  
6:27 in the context of the Sermon on the Mount- "To those who are listening, I say..."

No one did this sort of thing. Jesus was never authorized by the jewish leaders and he bypassed them and totally ignored their whole system of authorization. And so obviously this created conflict and tension around the issue of authority all throughout Jesus ministry.

The point is this: These chief priest, teacher of the law, scribes, elders, They were the authorities of the day and it was their job and responsibility to keep the system of authority in check. To keep it in order.

It was their responsibility to ask Jesus the question. "Who do you think you are and by what authority do you do these things?"

Now, in their case they were not asking with the intent to find truth or to know where Jesus' authority came from, and definitely any acknowledgement that it was God given was out fo the picture.

No, they were looking to trap him, and to expose him. To get him to admit that he was never granted the authority by the Sanhedrin to do the things he had done.

More than once Jesus has made it pretty clear by his words and actions that His authority is God given and he only says and does what God the Father showed him to do has told him to say.

*John 12:49- For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken*

*John 5:19 Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing*

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And boy, they would have just loved for Him to have said that again in front of all these people because then they would have accused Him of blasphemy, and arrested him, and get rid of the problem.

But Jesus knew exactly what they were up and his answer is great!

"I'll also ask you a question, John's authority to baptize- from God or people?"

Just like Jesus, when John the baptist came as his forerunner he came teaching and baptizing without any permission or authority from the Jewish leaders. Because, it was God given authority. The people recognized this, the Jewish leaders saw this.

Jesus isn't merely avoiding the question or the answer because if they actually answered the question, they would have the answer to their question. Actually his question is one that would reveal if they were capable of recognizing and acknowledging God's authority when they saw it.

But they are trapped and they know it. "Huddle up guys. What do we say to that? If we say God then we will be accused of not believing. If we say human then we lose what authority we have left with the people, and they are gonna stone us. Any suggestions? Ooh ooh, I got it... We will say, 'we don't know'. Alright break.

And so that's what they say... "We don't know". In other words we refuse to answer and admit Jesus is messiah. Their minds are made up, they will not listen, their eyes are shut and their hearts are hardened.

So Jesus simply replies, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

And the crowd goes wild! We are like, "Yeah Jesus. You tell them! Boo jewish leaders. They just don't get it do they?"

This is where we like to place ourselves in the story, right? On the right side with Jesus and definitely not with the Jewish Leaders.

But if that is all we do and if we just end there, then we miss the point. We need to face the truth that we are often like the jewish leaders and in this we also are confronted with the same question of Jesus' authority in our life and we need to answer. Who is Jesus to you and what authority does he have?

All throughout Jesus' life and ministry he connects authority with obedience. His divine authority comes with an invitation to respond to take action and there is no middle ground. We either obey or we oppose.

Jesus not only had power, that is the strength and ability to do things, but he had true authority. And true authority is something that can only be given, not taken. Jesus obeyed the Father and God gave him all authority. He was the true faithful obedient one who gave himself on our behalf.

Not only that but his authority comes from those who follow him and choose to live in obedience to Him and His will. By obedience and seeking His will we give witness to his authority.

Jesus is pretty clear that It isn't just what we say but our obedience in action that matter. Our actions demonstrate what we actually believe and show our obedience to his authority. Jesus desires our repentance. Turning to Him. Denying ourself, our own authority and following him.

It's our obedience that matters to Him and knowing this we need to answer : How do we respond to Jesus' authority?

And if we are honest with ourselves perhaps at times we wonder, and we question Jesus' authority. And maybe we don't come right out and say it but through our actions, and our obedience or lack of we are essentially saying, "Jesus, who died and made you boss?"

The answer is Jesus died and he died for you and me. He rose again and as he declares in Matthew 28: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go( obey, do something, take action) and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Authority and obedience. This is not a one and done deal but a daily decision. One day at a time by his strength, by his authority. Daily denying of our self, our own authority and daily taking up our cross and following him. "Not my will but Your will be done!"

This table and communion meal is a reminder and such a beautiful picture of Jesus' true authority.

Jesus, Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;  
rather, he made himself nothing  
by taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.  
And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to death—  
even death on a cross!  
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,  
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:6-11)

Authority and obedience. Obey or oppose. Will we allow him to be Lord of our lives? To have authority over our thoughts, our attitudes, our wants, our needs, our fears, our relationships, our challenges, our money?

Will we renew our own commitment to be faithful obedient followers of Jesus seeking His will? That not only in word but through our lives and in our actions we will give witness to the authority of Jesus in our lives and in this world. That He is Lord and Savior. The only way. The true Truth! And abundant life.