

WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY?

(Colossians 3:17)

Intro.

1. The word anarchy is defined as “a state of society without government or law, political and social disorder due to the absence of governmental control, lack of obedience to an authority; insubordination, confusion and disorder.”
2. We would probably use the word chaos instead.
3. But notice the definition: lack of obedience to an authority, confusion, disorder.
4. That sounds a lot like the religious world today.
5. There is lack of obedience to an authority.
6. There is confusion about who and what is authoritative.
7. There is disorder because so many people are following so many different things.
8. The reason for these problems existing in the world is that too few people are actually listening to the One with authority, and Who possesses the only authority.
9. Men have devised all manner of documents to which they have given authority.
10. Some have even given authority to certain leaders.
11. Some have themselves as their authority.
12. The truth is, there is one passage that settles the matter of who has the authority and that is the passage that was read for us a few moments ago.
13. Not only does it settle who has the authority, but it shows us the way we ought to live because He has the authority.
14. An anonymous poet wrote: In gladness I go forth each day, Expectantly to serve and claim, The happiness that service gives, When freely rendered in Christ's name.
15. What we want to do in this sermon is go through this verse and see what it says about authority and make sure that we are following what this verse says.

I. The authority Figure.

- a. When living our lives, we understand that we are under the authority of someone else in nearly all that we do.
 - i. Generally, most of us don't have a problem with that.
 - ii. In school, we are or were under the authority of our teachers, who are under the authority of the administration, who are under that authority of the superintendent, who is under the authority of the board, who is under the authority of the state, who is under the authority of the federal government.
 - iii. You could map this out in every area of our lives.
- b. For whatever reason, many in the religious world do not feel the same way about authority in religion.
- c. Our Lord prayed and died for unity.
 - i. In that prayer before His death, He showed us the pattern for unity.
 - ii. That they all may be one in us.
- d. Jesus stated that the place of unity is in Him and the Father.
- e. However, man has come along and in various ways has made the place of unity somewhere else and the authority figure someone else.
 - i. Now, in most man made religious groups, much lip service is given to Jesus being the head of their group.

- ii. But there is no way for Jesus to be the head over anything in which His will is not being followed.
- f. It was Jesus Who was given all authority by the Father (Matthew 28:18).
- g. It was Jesus Who was placed as the Head of the body (Ephesians 1:22-23).
- h. Since such is the case, it is incumbent upon man to come to Jesus in His way.
- i. When Paul wrote, in the name of the Lord Jesus, he was, by inspiration, telling us who has the authority.
 - i. Notice 2 Thessalonians 3:6.
 - ii. This same phrase is present and it means by the authority of Jesus.
- j. Jesus has all authority, given Him by the Father after being resurrected from the dead, and it is Him to whom we must listen.
- k. There is no room in this verse for our feelings, some man's teachings, visions, dreams, or anything not from Jesus, of which the New Testament is the only word we have from Him.

II. The amount.

- a. People are funny in that we tend to want to control as much as we possibly can.
- b. We want some area or areas of our lives to have to ourselves and to say that we are in complete control of them.
- c. This verse removes those areas from our lives.
 - i. The verse starts with "Whatsoever ye do" and then says "do all".
 - ii. Those two phrases show us the amount of our activities that are under the authority of Jesus.
- d. The word translated "whatsoever" is also translated "whosoever" in Matthew 10:32-33.
 - i. Is confession of Christ open to all men?
 - ii. Well, we know that it absolutely is.
 - iii. All that confess the name of Christ before men will be confessed before the Father by Christ.
 - iv. This shows us that that whatsoever encompasses all that we do.
- e. The next phrase "do all" leaves no doubt as to the amount of our activities that are under the authority of Jesus.

III. The actions.

- a. What is to be done in the name of Jesus?
- b. Paul, by inspiration, tells us that whatever we do in word or deed is done in Jesus' name.
- c. Whatever we say and whatever we do.
- d. In this text, Jesus talks about religious matters before this verse.
 - i. The way we worship is to be done with the authority of Jesus.
 - ii. We don't get to decide what we want to do in worship.
 - iii. Worship must be done in the name of, by the authority of, Jesus.
- e. But we can't stop at worship.
 - i. Beginning in verse 18, Paul starts talking about family relationships.
 - ii. He then talks about working relationships.
 - iii. Every aspect of our lives must be done with the authority of Jesus.
- f. Latin is a dead language for most people. Yet not too long ago it was taught as an elective in many of our secondary schools. I recall my own struggles to read Caesar and Cicero. But now it's rare to find anyone, except some members of the clergy, who has studied that ancient tongue. At best we can understand a few of the phrases that are still in common use like anno domini (abbreviated as AD), "The year of our Lord."

- i. It would be spiritually helpful, though, if we followed the example of musical genius Johann Sebastian Bach. Often at the bottom of a manuscript he would write the letters INDNJC, standing for the Latin words. In Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- ii. We aren't geniuses composing timeless music. We are just ordinary people engaged in routine activities. Yet everything we do ought to be done INDNJC. If we're homemakers, we can prepare meals and wash dishes INDNJC. If we're teachers, we can prepare lessons and grade papers INDNJC. If we're builders, we can cut wood and drive nails INDNJC.

IV. The act-ers.

- a. Paul lets us know who all is included in the one's doing the actions – ye.
- b. This means all Christians.
 - i. This letter wasn't written to a certain class of Christians.
 - ii. It wasn't just written to elders, deacons, and preachers.
 - iii. It wasn't just written to those who want to be known as really faithful.
- c. Every one of us must live with the understanding that all we do in everyday life as well as our spiritual lives, is to be done in the name of Jesus.
- d. This verse leaves out no Christian.
- e. Everything every Christian does is to be done in the name of Jesus.
- f. You might ask why?
 - i. The reason is, God gets the glory not us.
 - ii. Matthew 5:16.
- g. It's not about us showing others how great we are, but how great God is.

V. The attitude.

- a. For the average person, this probably sounds like a terrible way to live.
- b. Always being under the authority of Jesus, doing everything the way He has said to do it.
- c. Those that think this way fail to remember what it cost Jesus to obtain this authority.
 - i. It cost Him His life.
 - ii. Jesus didn't just show up and receive this authority.
 - iii. Yes, it was given Him by God but because of His willingness to die and going through with God's plan.
- d. Hebrews 5:8-9.
 - i. It was only through His suffering that He was made perfect.
 - ii. Notice that last part of the verse.
 - iii. He is the Author of eternal salvation for those who will obey Him.
 - iv. In other words, He is the Author of eternal salvation for those who will submit to His authority.
- e. When we think of the cost we ought to do all in the name of Jesus with great thankfulness to God for sending His Son for us.
- f. The attitude with which we do all in the name of Jesus must be thankfulness because we have had One who was willing to suffer for our sins.
 - i. God sent Jesus and Jesus was willing to come.
 - ii. If this doesn't cause us to submit to Him with thankfulness, then nothing will.

Conclusion

1. If there is ever a question of who has the authority in any area of life, this verse settles it.
2. It doesn't matter how you and I feel about something.

3. It doesn't matter what you and I want.
4. It doesn't matter what anyone else has said or written.
5. All that matters, in every area of life, is whether or not we can do it in the name of Jesus, by His authority.
6. Car racing legend Bobby Unser faced the toughest race of his life—and won. He and a friend, Robert Gayton, were snowmobiling in New Mexico when both of their sleds quit working. Snowdrifts as high as their chests, temperatures as low as zero, and winds as stiff as 70 mph hampered their attempt to find shelter. They even had to spend one night in a snow cave they made. Late the next day they found a barn with a heater and a phone.
7. After the rescue, Unser said, "Every decision we made had to be right." He and his friend had experienced a terrifying struggle with the elements they couldn't control as they did everything possible to stay alive.
8. As Christians, we are living in a world that is hostile to our spiritual survival. Every day we go up against forces that could destroy us. Some are internal—our pride and selfish desires. Some are external forces—ungodly media influences, acquaintances who don't support our faith, the stresses of life. Wrong decisions as we face these "blizzards" can lead to destruction.
9. Every move we make—each word and action—must be done in Jesus' name (Col. 3:17). We must live according to God's principles and act as we think Jesus would. That will make every move count.
10. Is this how you are living your life?
11. Jesus has the authority in all things, both spiritual and physical.
12. If you haven't given all of your life to Him, He isn't ruling in your life and you need to change that right now.