

Who's In Charge? Part 2

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[0 : 00] Glory to the righteous one. Yeah. Yeah. I have to acknowledge, if you don't mind, that this is breast cancer month.

And it is very near and dear to me as one of my dearest sister-in-laws is a survivor. But I wear pink every Lord's Day in this month in support of my dear sisters and mothers and sisters out there who are survivors struggling.

And to remember those who struggled until the end. And so out of respect for those of you who know this story. Much love.

And our prayers are with you and with your family. Okay. So just, we have another announcement I'm going to make at the end of the service. Don't let me forget because right now is not the time to make that announcement.

But let's, let's go to God. Father, we bless your glorious name. God bless you.

[1 : 13] How we love you. We only love you because you first loved us. We have no ability to love you. Unless you give it to us. With the new birth.

The new nature. The spirit of Christ in us. Loves you back. Oh. Help us to surrender more and more to that great love. Help us to be a people of love.

True love. Not that syrupy stuff the world talks about. But real love. The kind that gives oneself for our brothers and sisters.

And looks after our neighbors. Teach us the way. Empower us. Father, remember our mothers and sisters, Lord, who are struggling or have struggled with breast cancer.

We pray your grace upon them that they would keep fighting. And that they would know that their times are in your hands. They're not in the hands of the doctors.

[2 : 13] And certainly not even in the hands of the cancer. They're in your hands. And you never drop anyone who comes to you in faith. May they know your strength. We pray for remissions and healings.

You know who they are. Thank you for the medical knowledge we have now. But more than that, thank you for Dr. Jesus. For he is the great physician and healer.

Him we trust. Him we trust. Help us to trust him more. May we hear your word now. May it bless us and deepen us.

May it reprove, rebuke, exhort, heal, do all your holy will, guide. Lord, do what you do. This is your word. You make happen what you want to see.

And we know it will not return to you void. But it will accomplish your purposes. So just help me to preach it. Help me to preach your word. Help me to preach Jesus. In season and out of season.

[3 : 18] Help me to do it. As part of my worship. Receive this offering. In Christ's name. Amen.

Once again, we turn to John 7 and verses 14 to 24.

About the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and began teaching. The Jews therefore marveled, saying, how is it that this man has such learning when he has never studied?

So Jesus answered them. My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. If anyone's will, this is where our text begins this morning.

If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I'm speaking on my own authority. The one who speaks in his own authority seeks his own glory.

But the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true. And in him there is no falsehood. Has not Moses given you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law.

[4 : 22] Why do you seek to kill me? The crowd answered, you have a demon. Who is seeking to kill you? Jesus answered them, I did one work and you all marveled at it.

Moses gave you circumcision. Not that it's from Moses, but from the fathers. And you circumcise a man on the Sabbath.

If on the Sabbath a man receives circumcision so that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because on the Sabbath I made a man's whole body well?

Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment. That is the word of the Lord. You may be seated.

Thank you once again, praise you. And that was beautiful music. Thank you for assisting us in our worship. You ever call a business and you're speaking with a representative and not getting anywhere?

[5 : 31] I mean, really. It's like they even don't seem to understand you. You don't understand them. Or sometimes, let's be honest, you get the impression they really don't want to help you.

They just want to get you off the phone. So what do you do? I learned this from my wife. Can I speak to a manager? Right?

That's what you do. You say, hey, if you really want this done, you ask for a manager. Now things start to change. Hopefully. Many times they do. They can get the job done that the representative wasn't able to help you with.

They can even tell the person you were speaking to to get it done. Because you are now in contact with someone who has authority.

Family. Family. When we humbly come to Jesus, we are coming to someone who has authority over the universe.

[6 : 37] And the multiverse, if you're into that. And the microverse. Seen and unseen. He has all authority in heaven and earth.

But his authority isn't for your glory. And isn't primarily for your comfort. It's for him.

It's for God to display his majesty and reality and kingdom throughout the known universe.

And especially for those of us on this ball of earth that we may see and know him. It is as we submit to his authority that we enter into his blessings.

So, I got to ask you. Who's in charge of your life? Who's really in charge? Who's really calling the shots?

[7 : 43] Last week, we begin to look at this passage. We begin to, we recognize the authority of Jesus through his word. Because he is the word made flesh. Now let's move on to verse, to the verse, verse 15.

And I'm sorry, verse 17. And ask this question. Well, look at this. How can people recognize Christ's authority to teach us? How can people know that? Because that is the question, right?

People don't, people look at Jesus and say, so what? How can we recognize his authority? Point one.

To recognize his authority, your heart has to be open to God. If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.

After all, there are many religious leaders and religions out there claiming to have divine authority. The Lord Jesus says, it is a matter of your will.

[8 : 46] You've heard me say many times, echoing the Bible, that our hearts, our hearts are really the issue. The heart is the center of our being, remember, made up of our mind, our intellect, our will, our emotions, our imaginations.

The center of your being. Above all else, guard your heart. And notice the will is part of the heart. The will here represents our hearts.

It represents what we desire. Those who desire to do God's will can hear in Jesus' teaching the authority of God.

Now, notice how Lord didn't say those who desire to know God's will. Because many people claim to want to know God's will intellectually, even Christians.

We like knowing truth. Or we just like knowing something new. Sometimes we just like being impressive with the knowledge that we have.

[9 : 54] Even biblical knowledge. And that's to be commended to some extent, right? We want people to want to know truth. We should be people of truth.

It shouldn't be a minor thing for us. It's major because Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. So therefore, truth should be very, very high on our radar.

But Jesus says you can't stop with just knowing the truth. He says you will recognize his divine authority in his word if you will to do God's will.

Will speaks of, the word will speaks of desire, determination, inclination, and purpose. In other words, when you come to Jesus, when you say you're seeking God, you are saying, I want to, I have an inclination and a determination to not just know of his will, but I want to do it.

I mean, I can't tell you how many times people have said to me, Pastor, what's the will of God? I want to know the will of God for my life. And I point them to the book. And I don't want that will. Is there another will?

[11:14] Will? Too often, we want to know God's will only if it suits us.

But Jesus is saying, that's not Christianity. That's not faith in me. You will know the Christian submits to my authority because he and she wants to do my will.

You listen to Christ because you want to know and obey God, period. Doesn't mean that you do it all the time.

We fail, right? Lord, you know I mean it. You know I want to. But then we balk. You know in baseball when the pitcher gets ready to pitch, right?

And he sees a guy about to run, about to steal second base. And he goes into the motion of pitch and then turns his body. And see, it's called the balk if he gets out there too far.

[12:11] I don't know much about baseball, so you know the technicalities. But the idea here is he can't step toward the home plate and then toss that ball. It's called, so we step toward Jesus and then we go this way.

Hey, let's be real. But what is the great desire of your will? What's the great desire of your heart? Is it do you will to do God's will as revealed in Christ's word?

Otherwise, you're missing Jesus altogether. But we have a problem, don't we? Romans 3, 10, and 11. None is righteous. No, not one. No one understands.

No one seeks for God. You see, in our natural bent, our natural bent is we are not looking to do God's will. No one's seeking to do what he wants.

We talk about God, but in our natural state, none of us is seeking his will. Morally, intellectually, and in our own very will, we don't want the true God.

[13:31] We don't trust him. So how does that change? How, what is, Jesus, Lord, help us. How do we go from people who say, my kingdom come, my will be done.

How do we go from that to being people who he's describing here, who truly will to do his will? It's the sovereign work of God. It's the sovereign work of God to touch our hearts and our wills.

And again, John has told us about that in chapter 3, where he talks about how we must be born again of God's spirit, that we can now see and enter the kingdom of God where Jesus is king.

It is the new birth that births in all of us who believe in Jesus, the desire to do his will, the will to will his will. That is when I will and everything begins to change.

Philippians 2, 12 and 13, you know this passage. Paul is writing, What do you want us to do, Paul?

[14:44] Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Why, Paul? For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

That's the new, that's what the new birth does. God takes up residence by the spirit of Christ and he begins to conform your will to his will.

And so you will and now you work. That's what's happening as you, as you walk with Jesus day by day, year by year, you are working out your own salvation.

Notice the phrase, with fear and trembling. That's before God. Not that you're afraid of losing your salvation. You're working out your salvation in all of his greatness. You're blown away every day by his grace and his love and his mercy for you, a sinner.

And so you tremble in his presence and his word. And it means something when God speaks to you. You don't blow him off anymore because you recognize his reality. He's at work in you, moving your will, conforming your will.

[16:01] As the word of God finds you in the spirit of God, takes the word of God, convicts your conscience and moves your will and moves your, changes your desires, gives you new desires, as it were.

And you're enabled more and more to work and obey Jesus. But we must always remember that our will is always for the easy path.

Our will is always for the path of least resistance, the path of comfort, the path of least sacrifice. But that's not where Jesus always calls us.

Fortune magazine had an article, millennials want to live a soft life. And it's changing how they work. It's an interesting article. I committed to you to read this.

It's very interesting. It just hit me. A soft life. Now, I commend this much. There's some stuff to commend in our article.

[17:09] Millennials are saying, work ain't everything. Woo-hoo! There you go. But some of them ain't working at all. Can't get people to go to work, back to work anymore.

But that's not them. These folk are professionals and they're just learning. They just think there's more to life than work. Amen. But they're missing the big picture. It is through the hard places that God begins to work on us.

It's in those places where Jesus says, deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me. Those aren't soft places. Those aren't places where you put your feet up on the beach chair and, you know, you're just kicking back with the shades on and flip-flops.

Those are the places where you get on your face before God and you cry out for grace and mercy for a time of need. Those are the places where you get on your face and you say, Lord, I ain't gonna make it unless you help me.

Those are places of growth. When your will is to do something and yet God is saying, that's not the way. When your will is toward that person or toward that thing or that place or whatever it is where your will is going and Jesus is saying through his word, that is not the way.

[18:30] That's when you fall on your face. That's when you go into that wrestling match with the angel, you know, you become a Jacob. That's okay.

He wants you to wrestle. But you're gonna lose. It's okay. And losing, you win. You're gonna limp. You may have to get up and limp because you won it.

Your will was that way. And the fight with God left you limping. But limping is good. Jacob became Israel because of that limp.

You will grow in Christ when your will submits to his will because you love Jesus. You just recognize.

Sometimes it's hard to say it, but you know it's true. His will is better. What he's offering is better.

Even when you really don't see it just yet, you will.

[19:35] You will. But here's the thing. But Jesus, when Jesus left the scene, he passed down his authority to guide his church.

He passed it to his apostles. And that's why he told them to make disciples of the heavens and the earth because Jesus is not here in physical. So how does he reveal his will? He does it through his word, but he did it through the apostles who gave us much the New Testament.

But also they're gone. So does everyone become their own pastor, as it were? Oh, to some extent, yeah, we're all called to be priests for the Lord.

So there's truth in that. But Jesus continues to give God-called and gifted people to teach his word to his church time and time again.

And what a burden. Ephesians 4. Ephesians 4. He who descended is the one who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, to be all attained to the unity of the faith.

[20:53] We grow up. And now to the Son of God, to mature manhood to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Paul says God continues to speak.

Christ continues to speak his word. And he does it in particular, but not only through those he's called and gifted to lead his church.

But that person only has authority as the teaching is according to Christ's word.

And yes, we have false teachers in the church. It's the time of the apostles. They were false teachers. False apostles. Paul writes about them. And such abuse their authority in God's people and still do so today.

But on top of that, all who teach the word are flawed sinners. We're not like Jesus who's perfect. We're flawed sinners in need of God's grace just like you.

[22:00] So how can you trust teachers who claim to speak for Christ? How can you trust them? They're just men and women who need Jesus like you.

Jesus said in John 10 something that I love. My sheep hear my voice and they follow me. Get into the word for yourself.

Become acquainted with Jesus' voice. I'm afraid so often, saints, that we lack discernment when it comes to truth and teaching because we're not used to hearing Christ's voice ourselves.

We don't know the word. That's the responsibility of all Christians. To get into the word. To hear the voice of Jesus and learn to hear that voice as the spirit of God continues to speak through his word. Pay attention also to what is being taught. Ask questions. Get to know those who teach the word of God. Get to know their character. Most of all, purpose in your heart to follow Jesus and submit to his word yourself.

[23 : 14] Recognize that all of us are flawed and sinful. Pray for your leaders regularly. Don't idolize them. Even Christian teachers. If you have a preacher or a pastor and you say he or she is the only one for you, you have an idol.

You should be under the shepherding ministry of one church. Yes, where you know and are known. But within that body, there should be others who can speak into your life. There should be others in the body who can speak the word into your life other than the pastor.

People fall for false teachers too often because they are not following Christ, but a charismatic personality who is saying just what they want to hear.

Your desire has got to be to hear God's word and follow it no matter what. He is our great desire. Not our own plan or the pastor's plan per se, but Jesus.

To hear God in Jesus teaching, your heart, your will has to be in the right place. Do you truly want God's will for your life?

[24 : 42] Do you truly want God's will? David Mathis in his book, new book, Workers for Your Joy, says we have a problem. We live in an age that has become painfully cynical about leadership, he says.

Some of it for a good reason. Let's be honest. Much of it simply the mood of our times. I mentioned this last week actually. But high profile failures can mask the true source of discontent with being led.

We love self and come to pine for self-rule. Coupled with our generation's distorted sense of what leadership is. Here's this distorted sense. Symbol of status, achievement, privilege.

That's how our culture sees leadership. We desire to be the leader ourselves, not to bless others, but to get our own way. Who are you listening to?

Who are you listening to? Are you listening to Christ? Are you submitting your will to his will? Why are you a leader if you are one?

[25 : 52] Whose authority are you functioning under? Next thing I want you to notice, and I want to move quickly now so I can finish this today. Jesus' authority is seen in seeking God's glory.

I love that. The one, verse 18, the one who seeks his own authority seeks his own glory. But the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true.

In him there is no falsehood. Jesus continues to say in the gospel of John over and over again, he is not seeking his own glory, but the glory of his father.

That is what helps to authenticate him as one who is from God. He wants the glory of God, the glory of the father. Motives matter in our walking with God.

We see the authority of Jesus and we recognize it because he seeks to exalt his father. Now that should teach us something. What is our purpose?

[27 : 01] Whose glory are you seeking when you post online? Whose glory are you seeking when you're having a discussion with somebody, especially a disagreement?

Whose glory are you seeking in your home at work? When you write that resume and decide to add stuff that ain't true, whose glory are you seeking?

Jesus gave himself to seek not his own glory, but that of the father. John 5.30, I seek not my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

Not his own will. John 8.50, that I do not seek my own glory. There is one who seeks it and he is the judge. Listen, there's no ego in Jesus.

He knows who he is. He doesn't have to seek his own glory. He knows the father will do that.

Saints, that's a word. We don't have to seek our own glory.

[28 : 08] If God wants you exalted, he'll handle it. Jesus' promotion comes from the Lord. Let the Lord promote you.

Let the Lord establish your brand. Doesn't mean you don't do, if you're busy, you don't do marketing. Okay, amen. But tell the truth. Don't embellish yourself.

Speak the truth and let God exalt you as he sees fit. We are a culture engaged in self-exaltation. And it's killing us. Because all that stuff you say about you, now you got to try to maintain it. And if it's not true, man, that's a horrible wheel to be on.

You got that hamster, man. Woo, keep going. Because if I stop, they'll see who I am. If I stop, I might fail. And then, oh, if I fail, oh, I'm done.

[29 : 09] Listen, when you live for your own glory, failure is not an option. But when you live for the glory of Jesus, you can submit the results to him.

You can do your best. Who was that guy? Do your best. Pray that it's blessed. Rest and let Jesus take care of the rest. I love that.

That was a song. I can't remember who did it. I can rest. It's not about my glory. I get twisted in knots.

If I think it's about me. Jesus is the glory of God manifest. 2 Corinthians 4, 6. For God who said, let light shine under our darkness, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.

What a description. That's my favorite description of the gospel. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus.

[30 : 19] Wow. Meditate on that one. Tweet that. I'm serious. Let that blow your mind. Where do we see the glory?

Jesus did not seek his own glory, but yet where do we see the glory of God? We see it in Jesus, the one who humbles himself. Hallelujah. Who humbles himself to die on the cross, to be ridiculed and spit upon and rejected.

There we see him. And then he rises from the dead in total victory over death and devil and everything else that surrounds this universe. Nothing comes close to him.

Where do we see the glory? And I'll tell you one thing, family. I want my glory to be tied to his glory. Where he goes, I go.

When he says yes, I say yes. When he says no, I say no. I want that. But the truth of the matter is, let's be honest.

[31 : 23] Jesus' authority is always resisted by the unrighteous, 19 and 20. His authority is always resisted.

And in our flesh, we will resist as well. The people of that day, Jesus says, listen, you're trying to kill me. You say you believe in the law of God, but you're not keeping the law.

You're trying to kill me. They insult him. You have a demon. Who's seeking to kill you? Well, they were. They were. They were.

We're not seeking to kill you, Jesus. Hint, hint, hint. Put the knife down, Joe. Okay. I mean, really. They failed to keep the law because it was not ingrained in their hearts.

It was external and not internal. The new birth in Christ puts the law in our hearts so that now we want to obey God from the inside out.

[32 : 23] It's not Pharisaism anymore. It's discipleship. We are disciples, learners, disciples of the great one. And in our hearts, we just, we want to follow him no matter what.

But family, you, once you get in your own will, in your own flesh, yes. You will resist him. You will resist him.

That's why we have to cry out to Jesus for mercy and grace every day. Jesus said in Luke 6, 46 to 49, Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I tell you?

Everyone who comes to me and hears my word and does them, I will show you what he is like. He's like a man building a house who dug deep, laid the foundation on a rock. When a flood rose, the stream broke against the house and could not shake it because it had been well built.

One who hears and does not do my words is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, it immediately fell. The ruin of that house was great.

[33 : 29] Listen. Jesus is speaking about people in the church. Lord, Lord.

But resist his will. Not occasionally. No, this is a continual resisting. Lord, Lord.

I love Jesus. Lord, Lord. Yes, as Christians, we sometimes resist the Lord's authority.

Yes, we fall into the practice of unrighteousness. Unrighteousness. But if you are a true disciple, that's not the general bent of your life. That's not what's true about you.

Deep down. Deep down, you are saved. You are being sanctified. You are a child of God. That's who you are.

[34 : 35] That's who you are. Yes, at times you fail. At times you resist because you get into your own feelings. In long ways. Yes, it happens.

But listen, understand who you are. Repent and get up. Get up. If that's where you are right now, you've messed up. You've got into your own feels.

Get up. Ask the Lord to forgive you. Say, Lord, I want to let him know from your heart. I want what you want for me. I want your will.

I recognize your authority. And I surrender. My time is up. I don't know. Just one last thing. And I'm going to end this real quick.

Jesus has authority over your time. That's the 21 to 24. That's the Sabbath discussion.

[35 : 30] They're mad at Jesus because he healed somebody on the Sabbath. They're saying you can't do that. That's work. And Jesus says, hold it. What do you think you're talking to? I am the Lord of the Sabbath.

Sabbath. He said it in another place. He didn't say it in that passage, but he exemplifies it there. I am the Lord. I'm the master. What is the Sabbath about? The Sabbath is about rest.

But it's more than that. You do rest, don't you, by the way? If you don't have a Sabbath, you know, today in particular, the Lord's Day, some of us have to work on Sunday. We got to find another day to Shabbat, to Sabbath.

But the question is, do you Sabbath, do you recognize that you were not created by God to work seven days a week? Only he does that. The rest of us got to get a break, baby.

Get a break. Thank God for the week. Well, y'all get a weekend, but thank God for the weekend.

But especially for the Lord's Day. But the big picture here, the bigger picture, is he's saying, I am Lord of your time.

[36 : 36] How you spend it, where you spend it, how much time you have on this earth. When you begin, where you end, I am Lord of your time. Your time is not yours.

As a Christian, our bodies are not even ours anymore. We have been bought with a price.

Therefore, glorify God with your bodies. If our bodies belong to God, that also means your time belongs to God.

How do you spend your time? Are you willing to rest when you're supposed to? Are you a workaholic? Do you not work at all?

Not because you can't, but because you just don't want to work. Because you know, both of those are wrong. Both of those are abuse of your time. You're not meant to work all the time.

But you are meant to work. If you are able before, able-bodied, able-minded to do so. You are meant to work. That's how he created us. The sluggard is not a friend of God.

[37 : 45] Your time, whether you're retired or wherever you work, your time is still his. How are you using it? How will you use it?

Will you give God your time? Will you give God? Lord, I can be used here. I can be used there. I can give my time here. Will you do that? Will you surrender your time to Jesus? Because if you're on this planet, he still wants to use you for his glory.

And that means you're going to work. And it's okay. It's okay. So your time belongs to him. Well, just a few more application thoughts, I guess.

How should we respond and view authority? God's authority is king. Plain and simple. Nothing takes the place of God's authority in the life of the believer.

His authority is king. Second, respect all legitimate authority and obey it as long as it doesn't conflict with your ability to do God's will.

[38 : 57] Romans 13, 1 to 7, if you get a chance to look at that. God gives authority to other people. God, only God's in charge.

Only God's my authority. Well, yes and no. Yes, ultimately he is your only authority. No, he's not the only authority in your life that as a believer we're supposed to obey.

We have government. We have family, parents, etc. Understand, you are under authority at all times.

Nobody is a law unto themselves. God's authority must be sacred and first.

Praise good leadership and, necessarily, respectfully challenge bad leadership. Respectfully challenge. But recognize the authority has been given by God. He's first.

[39 : 57] And lastly, recognize that Christ bought you with his own blood. His sacrifice for your sins. He is your first allegiance. His sacrifice brings you under the authority of the kingdom of God.

That's how you got there. His word is the truth that guides your life, guides your treasure, guides your love, and guides you even in death. In his word, you are set free.

In his authority, you are set free to live the life you were created to live. You are always under authority. But do you submit to Christ's authority?

It's his authority what makes your life sing. Father, help us. There's so many people and things and ideas vying for our attention.

Help us to seek first your kingdom and submit ourselves to your authority. Even as your people must live under authorities, may we never, never compromise your will.

[41 : 07] Even if it costs us, Lord, may we submit first to your authority in everything. Thank you for the new birth that makes it possible. In Jesus' name.