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Living in HisStory: Revealing the True Wonder of Who God Is
In Jesus' Name
Matthew 28:18-20
May 27, 2018, Jeff Germs

Last week we looked at a conversation Jesus had with a Roman Officer. The conversation was all about authority. It's a familiar story to many of us. It's easy to miss the main point in passages we are familiar with. We could have read that passage and simply come away believing that Jesus will heal us or answer our prayers because we believed he would. It would be easy to believe that we simply need to muster up enough faith. If you weren't here last week make sure you go to the website and watch the video. It is background to what I want to talk about today.

The basic gist of the sermon from last week was that our faith needs to be in the authority of Jesus, not in some preconceived outcome of our prayers. We often pray for things, sometimes desperately, and can't seem to get peace unless God answers our prayers in the way we want. So, we may never have peace in that case.

Today's sermon was supposed to be about the Day of Atonement, one of the most important Jewish festivals; however, I felt nudged by the Lord to change directions because of all the feedback I got from the sermon last week. I was in prayer about it and the Lord brought to my attention some very common passages about the authority of Jesus that are so important and foundational, but I didn't have time to fit them in last week, so I'd like to deal with them this morning to round off this idea of the authority of Jesus a little more.

When I was growing up, our family would pray a prayer before we ate and another one before we went to sleep. All my cousins in their families prayed the same prayers. Before we ate we would all bow our heads and fold our hands just like the perfect family in a Norman Rockwell painting, and we would all recite together, "Come Lord, Jesus, be our guest, let these gifts to us be blessed. Amen!" Before we went to bed we would pray, "Now I lay me down to sleep I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake I pray the Lord my soul to take. In Jesus name, amen!"

As we got older our parents taught us to pray in our own words and end our prayers with, "In Jesus' name, amen!" A prayer was never complete without saying those words. That has stayed with me right up until today. For most of my life, I didn't really question what I was doing. I just knew that, for whatever reason, I thought my prayer carried no power without that tagline at the end. I would never have said it, but it sort of became like a magic incantation like, "Abracadabra."

I still usually close off my prayers with, "In Jesus name," mostly to remind myself whose authority I am praying in. That is what it means when we pray in Jesus' name. God does not listen to us more because we say those words. We are not required to say them at the end of our prayers. We simply need to keep in mind when we pray that it is Jesus' death and resurrection that has bridged the gap for us so we can enter the presence of our holy God who loves us and wants to hear us, and it is only by *his* authority that we can enter God's presence, and have our prayers heard and answered.

This is such an important concept. We have been chosen, called and sent by the authority of Jesus. We have no authority of our own.

When I officiate weddings, before I let them seal the deal with a kiss, I say, "By the authority vested in me by the power of British Columbia, I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may now kiss the bride." And of course, I always assume that was their first ever kiss.

I have no authority to marry anyone on my own. I am *authorized* by the Province of British Columbia to solemnize weddings. Likewise, we have no authority in prayer, or life in the kingdom of God, except through Jesus. We operate under his authority.

The Pharisees and teachers of the law in the New Testament often questioned Jesus' authority. Even in the passage we looked at two weeks ago about the paralyzed man who was lowered through the roof by his friends to get healing from Jesus, the religious elite was there to cause trouble and question his authority.

Jesus told the man that his sins were forgiven. The religious people freaked out calling Jesus blasphemous. So, Jesus said:

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Mark 2:10–11 (NLT)

10 So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins.” Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, 11 “Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!”

The question is always about Jesus' authority. This may be the most important thing to know about Jesus. He has authority over everything — everything.

When Jesus taught, people often said, “He doesn't teach like the other religious teachers. He teaches like someone who has authority.” In other words, he is not just teaching truth. He is the truth. That's what he said about himself,

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John 14:6 (NLT)

6 ...“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.

So, Jesus did not come to show us the way, or to show us the truth, or to show us how to live a good life. He is *the* way. He is *the* truth. He is *the* life. He is *the* authority, and the author of life.

We often quote the great commission in sermons at CRBC.

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Matthew 28:19–20 (NLT)

19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

These are the marching orders Jesus gave his disciples. It was one of the last things he said to them before he ascended to heaven. This is the business of the church. It is our mission statement. He has called us to be all about “Leading people to become committed followers of Jesus Christ.”

The verse that precedes these verses though is very important, and it many times gets neglected.

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18 Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

All authority in heaven and earth belongs to Jesus. All authority. That is a lot of authority. There is no power or authority in heaven or on earth that is not accountable to Jesus. We need to base our lives on

this truth. When we wake up in the mornings we need to humbly recognize that we are entering a new day under his authority, and then continually remind ourselves of that truth. There is no authority or power that is not accountable to Jesus.

There is a well known account that Jesus had with his disciples that really brings this to light and it struck fear into the hearts of his disciples.

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Mark 4:35–41 (NLT)

³⁵ As evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, “Let’s cross to the other side of the lake.” ³⁶ So they took Jesus in the boat and started out, leaving the crowds behind (although other boats followed). ³⁷ But soon a fierce storm came up. High waves were breaking into the boat, and it began to fill with water. ³⁸ Jesus was sleeping at the back of the boat with his head on a cushion. The disciples woke him up, shouting, “Teacher, don’t you care that we’re going to drown?”

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³⁹ When Jesus woke up, he rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Silence! Be still!” Suddenly the wind stopped, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ Then he asked them, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?” ⁴¹ The disciples were absolutely terrified. “Who is this man?” they asked each other. “Even the wind and waves obey him!”

Who is this man? Even the wind and the waves obey him. Jesus was no ordinary man. He was and is God. What does that mean to you and me today? Is Jesus just a theological idea? Is he just one part of your statement of belief?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

That is the Apostles’ Creed. Is Jesus just a theological truth somewhere in your system of belief that you give intellectual assent to? This question is the most important question. The answer not only determines where we will spend eternity, but it will also determine how we do life on earth right now. It will determine how we face difficulty. It will determine how we face opposition. The answer to who Jesus is to you will determine how you face uncertainty in regards to your future. It will even determine how you face the trauma and tragedy of your past.

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The question for us is this:

Is Jesus just a theological idea, or a historical figure, or is he the one true God who really does have all authority in heaven and on earth, and have you given him authority over your life?

Jesus even has authority over your past, if you give it to him. Here’s the deal. Satan loves to tell us lies. He deals in lies and half truths. He will tell you that you have to be defined by your past. You failed in your past, so forever more, you are destined to be a failure. That is a lie from the pit of hell.

Satan will tell you that you are no good. He will feed you all kinds of lies that keep you paralyzed with fear. The only weapon Satan has against those who are in Christ is lies and half truths. That means that he is impotent to harm you if you give Jesus authority over your life.

There are lies we are all tempted to believe. Those lies have power over us if we believe them. Satan would have us chained to our past and living in bondage. The Bible says that Jesus came to free the captives and give sight to the blind and hope to the broken hearted. He said that the truth would set us free (John 8:32).

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That means **we can combat the lies of Satan with the truth of the authority of Jesus.**

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Luke 4:31–37 (NLT)

31 Then Jesus went to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and taught there in the synagogue every Sabbath day. 32 There, too, the people were amazed at his teaching, for he spoke with authority. 33 Once when he was in the synagogue, a man possessed by a demon—an evil spirit—cried out, shouting, 34 “Go away! Why are you interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

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35 But Jesus reprimanded him. “Be quiet! Come out of the man,” he ordered. At that, the demon threw the man to the floor as the crowd watched; then it came out of him without hurting him further. 36 Amazed, the people exclaimed, “What authority and power this man’s words possess! Even evil spirits obey him, and they flee at his command!” 37 The news about Jesus spread through every village in the entire region.

Even the wind and the waves, and the evil spirits obey Jesus because he has all authority in heaven and earth. Jesus has all authority over all heaven and earth. The Bible says that one day everyone will bow and recognize that he is the King.

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The question for each of us this morning is **do we trust the authority of Jesus, not just for our eternity, but for yesterday, today, and tomorrow?** He is the God of the past, present and future.

Let me give you a real life example from my own life that I continually wrestle with. I have been told by a number of people in my life who love me that I don’t know how to sabbath. Sabbath means rest. Sabbath was a spiritual discipline God gave us to replenish our energy. To sabbath is actually one of the commands that God gave his people in the Old Testament.

Sabbath is a way of trusting God. I have had a difficult time sabbathing because I don’t really trust God. My work is never done. I have such a strong desire to get better at whatever I do, that I have a hard time just doing my best with the time God has given me and then stopping and leaving the rest to the authority of Jesus. This is something that I am currently in the middle of learning from Jesus.

Remember the passage I often quote to you.

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Matthew 11:28–30 (NLT)

28 Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”

It’s time I started to practice what I preach. I took my first long weekend in many years last week. I cannot remember the last time I had a long weekend. I can hardly remember the last time I had two days off in a row. I have gone weeks on end many times without any full days off. I am not telling you this so you will applaud me for being such a hard worker. I am confessing to you that I have not trusted God enough to enter into his rest. That is not okay! Jesus promised that if I would take his yoke upon

me and learn from him he would give me rest. I have not trusted the authority of Jesus with my ministry. Sabbath is not just another of the many religious things that God demands of us that we need to check off our to-do list. Sabbath asks the question, “Do I trust my future to the authority of Jesus?”

That’s just one example of how I have not submitted to the authority of Jesus in my life. There are other things he has been teaching me to surrender to his authority as well. Life with Jesus is all about learning to surrender control to him. Do we trust him enough with whatever causes us anxiety?

How about you? What is it in your life? What ways do you try to wrestle control from Jesus? Is it with your career? Your relationships? Your kids? Your parents? Your future marriage partner? Your future retirement? Your past? Your insecurities? Your health? Your daily life and your busy schedule? Remember, all authority in heaven and on earth belong to Jesus. All of it.

We need to put our whole lives through the sieve of Jesus’ authority.

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What areas of your life are you holding back from the authority of Jesus? There is nobody here who is not holding back something. What lies of Satan are you believing about yourself, God or others?

I was on my way to Starbucks to work on my sermon on Wednesday and I was listening to CBC on the radio. They were interviewing a young man and an older man about an incident that happened twenty-five years ago when the two met. The young man at that time was a baby. The older man was a fire fighter in the fire department in Windsor, Ontario.

It was on November 11th and he was walking to the Remembrance Day service with his fire chief when they got a call that there was a fire in a house nearby. They ran over and tried to get in the building, but there was too much smoke to gain access. The man ran around to the back of the building and looked up to the second story and saw a mother holding her baby out the window to protect him from the smoke.

The fireman went below the window and took an overcoat and wrapped it around both of his arms sort of fashioning a little gurney to catch the baby in. He yelled up to the mother to let the baby go. She was frantic, and said, “No!” Again, he said, “Let the baby go. I can catch him.” “No,” she said. Once more he urged her to trust him for the sake of her baby. She finally let go and the baby fell safely in the arms of the firefighter. Both mother and baby were saved. Wednesday was the twenty-fifth anniversary of that event, where that boy’s mother trusted the fireman enough to let go of her son.

What is the Lord telling you to trust him with? What are you not letting go to Jesus? Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth for your past, present and future. He is fully capable of handling your life if you surrender to him.

Let’s read a couple other passages about Jesus’ authority and power. We need to know this. We need to get it from our heads to our hearts. We need to not just know these truths intellectually. We need to believe them where they affect how we live.

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Ephesians 1:19–21 (NLT)

19 I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power 20 that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms. 21 Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come.

We need to ask ourselves if we really believe this. If we do, it will affect how we live. It will, eventually, even affect how we feel. Do we really believe that Jesus has all authority and power, and have we truly surrendered our lives to him in every way? Likely not. I know that the Holy Spirit is speaking to some of you right now gently nudging you to let go and let him catch you. You can trust him. Let go!

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Colossians 1:15–16 (NLT)

¹⁵ Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, ¹⁶ for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.

This is true about Jesus and it should affect how we live.

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Colossians 2:9–10 (NLT)

⁹ For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. ¹⁰ So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

These are such amazing truths. The Holy Spirit has been speaking to me and urging me to let go and fall into his strong and capable arms. How about you?

There may be some of you here today who have not yet trusted Jesus with your eternal destiny. Where will you spend eternity after you die? One day, unless the Lord returns, each of us will die. We cannot escape death. We will all have to answer to the question of who Jesus is to us.

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Have you trusted in the authority of Jesus for your eternity?

In Philippians 2, the Apostle Paul wrote that Jesus purposefully humbled himself, left his throne in heaven, and died on a cross so we could enter into relationship with a holy God. Then he said this:

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Philippians 2:9–11 (NLT)

⁹ Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

At the name of Jesus every knee will one day bow. Everyone of us, either in this life, or the next will discover that Jesus really is the King of kings and he reigns supreme over all. If you have not yet made the choice to trust him with your life, make sure you do that today. There is no magic prayer you need to pray. You simply need to believe in your heart that Jesus had the authority to die to pay the penalty for your sins so you could enter into relationship with a holy God, and that he rose from the dead to give you life. If you have not yet done that, I urge you to let go and trust him today. He is able to catch you.

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Jude 24–25 (NLT)

²⁴ Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. ²⁵ All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen.

All glory! All majesty! All power! All authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Past! Present! And future! That is pretty amazing, isn't it!

The Bible is not just about history, or a guidebook on how to live our lives right now. It also tells us what is going to happen in the future. One day, at just the right time, Jesus is going to destroy Satan completely and forever. The last book of the Bible tells us about those times.

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Revelation 12:10 (NLT)

10 Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens, "It has come at last— salvation and power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth— the one who accuses them before our God day and night.

Jesus has all authority over all heaven and earth. One day he will completely and utterly forever destroy Satan. In the meantime, the accuser is continually, day and night accusing you before God. He is pointing his finger at you. He is trying to get you to believe he has power over you. He is telling you that you were not worth dying for. He is trying to tell you that you need to be a victim of your past. He is telling you that you should just give up. He is a liar and he has no power over you because Jesus is your authority. That is the truth we need to believe and live in every minute of every day.

I am going to close by reading the same passage I read to you often at the end of my sermons. Take this in. Let it wash over you. Receive it in your spirit, as from Jesus, your authority, to you.

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Ephesians 3:14–21 (NLT)

14 When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, 15 the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. 16 I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.

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17 Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. 18 And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.

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19 May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. 20 Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

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21 Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

All authority belongs to Jesus. Let's go out with that authority and boldly live the life he's called us to.



***Living in HisStory: Revealing the True Wonder of Who God Is
In Jesus' Name
Matthew 28:18-20
Week of May 27, 2018***

Objective of this study: To surrender more of our lives to the authority of Jesus.

[Remember, the main goal of each Growth Group is to allow God's Word to change your heart so that others would see Jesus in you and be likewise changed to be like him. He wants to change the world through us.]

Worship (5 – 10 minutes)

1. Sing a song or two of praise and thanksgiving to God.
2. Spend five minutes in silence asking God to prepare your heart for how he wants to speak to you.
3. After the five minutes have someone interrupt the silence and read **Jude 24-25** meditatively to the group. Pause after each phrase letting God speak to you. **Did anything “jump out at you”?**

Welcome (5 minutes)

Describe the best boss you worked for? What made him/her good?

[It's really important when doing this study that we each think about ourselves specifically and ways we need to grow, not how Christians in general need to grow. Do the hard work of letting the Holy Spirit speak to *your* heart.]

Word/Work (60-90 minutes)

1. What stood out from the sermon?
2. What comes to your mind when you think of an authority figure?
3. What are some of your good or bad experiences with authority figures?
4. Break into pairs or small groups and divide up these passages looking for everything they say about the authority or power of Jesus and then debrief with the group about how your findings should impact your life: Mark 2:1-12; John 14:1-7; Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 4:31-37; Matthew 11:27-30; Ephesians 1:19-21; Colossians 1:15-16; Colossians 2:9-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Jude 24-25; Ephesians 3:14-21; Revelation 12:10.

Sermon quote: “Is Jesus just a theological idea, or a historical figure, or is he the one true God who really does have all authority in heaven and on earth, and have you given him authority over your life?”

5. Is the thought of Jesus' authority comforting? Intimidating? Something else? Why?

Sermon quote: “Jesus even has authority over your past, if you give it to him. Here's the deal. Satan loves to tell us lies. He deals in lies and half truths. He will tell you that you have to be defined by your past. You failed in your past, so forever more, you are destined to be a failure. That is a lie from the pit of hell.”

6. What difference does it make in your life when you recognize and submit to Jesus' authority?
7. What areas of your life is the Holy Spirit nudging you to entrust more to Jesus?

Prayer

1. Spend the rest of the time praying for each other. **Praise God together for how he works, and how he allows us to partner with him to accomplish things in his kingdom.**
2. Here are some things you can pray about for the church:
 - A. That, as a church, we would actively and purposefully engage in the mission of Jesus in Campbell River.
 - B. Our church board and staff as they lead us to live out the mission of Jesus
 - C. River Kids ministry as they reach out to kids in our community.
 - D. **Our missionary of the month:** Ken and Debbie Dewar
 - E. **Our missionary of the week:** Diego & Claudia Cardona
 - F. **Local CR church:** Quadra Island Bible Church - search for a new pastor