

One with Authority

[Announce Text] Please Open your Bibles to Luke 20:1-19. [Page 878](#)

[Scripture Introduction] Good morning, my name is Brett Sweet and I'm one of the pastors here at Grace Christian Fellowship where we exist to glorify God through gospel-centered worship, evangelism, discipleship, and community. We are continuing our series through the book of Luke.

Review...predestined...conflict.

[Prayer for illumination] Please pray with me...

[Illustration] What do the following people have in common: Malcolm X, the Joker from *Batman*, toddlers, and drivers running late for church. One answer is this: they resist authority. Malcolm X resisted authority and it got him killed. The Joker promotes anarchy for laughs. Toddlers shout, "No!" and refuse to come when their parents call. And us when we drive, well, we'll just ignore that speed limit sign today. We refuse to yield to authority. We resist it. We do what we want.

Ever since our first parents refused to yield to God's authority to not eat a forbidden fruit, we've inherited their natures and habits. We don't like others to exercise authority over us. We don't like others getting in our way. Like drivers who see the yield sign, but refuse to slow down or examine what else might be going on, we refuse to yield. We act like nobody should be in authority over us.

What if God Almighty sent Someone with His authority? How would we respond? Would we resist or would we yield to His authority? Luke 20:1-19 are all about Jesus' authority, and how we should respond to Him. And the response is this:

[Proposition] Yield to Jesus' Authority

In Luke's gospel, the Jewish leaders have been against Jesus and His cousin and forerunner John the Baptist. The leaders are part of the religious establishment. They like the authority that gives them. But now Jesus acts like He has authority. Will they yield? What sort of authority does Jesus even have and what can we learn about it in these verses? Luke is going to help us yield to Jesus' authority by showing us Jesus' authority in action and see Jesus' authority in a story.

[Main Point 1] Jesus' Authority in Action

All sorts of people try to rebuild Jesus into how they want Him to be. But it's much more reliable to think about the people who were actually with Him. In these verses we get to see what they see about Jesus's authority in action. So we'll start with

[Subpoint 1] Observing Jesus' Authority in Action

Let's actually go back to Luke 19:45 and continue it through 20:1

And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a den of robbers." And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words.

One day, as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up...

Jesus is not hidden. Jesus' actions are not hidden. His actions are observed. And this causes the important religious leaders to wonder who gave Jesus this authority. *They* have received their authority through religious institutions. *They've* gone to school. *They* were taught by Rabbis. *They* have been in and around the Temple all the time. *They've* paid their dues. And here some northerner with a sort of hick accent starts changing things. He forces the salesmen out of the temple. He just teaches without being introduced or endorsed by important people. Who or what gives Him the right?

Imagine a visitor just ripping the microphone out of the stand, interrupting the pastor, reorganizing how the ministries function, and changing the whole course of a Sunday morning. Jesus seems to be doing that. Jesus is not asking for permission. He is acting like He has authority. He does this publicly. And people notice. And that leads to questions.

So we're looking at Jesus' authority in Action. We've observed Jesus' authority in action. Now let's see the next thing.

[Subpoint 2] Questioning Jesus' Authority in Action

These actions are challenges. And the religious leaders, who've been against Jesus for a while now, have had enough. They are going to question where he gets off acting like this. But they're going to get more than they bargained for.

Let's read vv. 2-8

...and (the religious leaders) said to him, "Tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority." He answered them, "I also will ask you a question. Now tell me, was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?" And they discussed it with one another, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From man,' all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet." So they answered that they did not know where it came from. And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

From the very beginning of Luke's gospel, John the Baptist's ministry has been tied to Jesus. They've been closely related. Religious leaders have authority in Jerusalem. And what is so, so nice about having authority is that you get to evaluate people. You can judge them. You get to use your power to influence people. And this is a good thing if you are a humble person. If you use your power, authority, and influence to serve. If you love people and have convictions. And what we find is that these religious leaders don't. What starts out as them questioning Jesus' authority ends with Jesus questioning them and their authority.

Like a good Rabbi, Jesus teaches by asking a question. "What do you think about John the Baptist? You know, my cousin, who was the people's prophet? Who challenged you? The one you rejected for months? How do you evaluate him? But these religious leaders don't care about conviction, and they don't care about truth. All they care about is their position and their authority. They rejected John's baptism, so if John truly was a prophet, they'd have to humble themselves and say they were wrong. But if they hold their ground, they'll lose their influence over the people and maybe even their lives- as death was the penalty for improperly rejecting a true prophet. So, in our day, they'd text Jesus back with capital letters IDK. "I don't know." And Jesus has now shown that their authority is illegitimate. If they lack the spiritual ability to discern John's authority- and they admit that- what makes them think they have the spiritual ability to discern the

source of Jesus' authority. They are unqualified authorities and evaluators. And that means Jesus doesn't need to answer them.

[Application] We are so important. We are so educated. We are so refined. We live in the 21st Century. We don't need medical experts, *we'll* read three articles online. Thank you. Where does our boss or the neighborhood president or the school board get off telling us what's best for us? So, we challenge and question their authority. And sometimes that's right. But then we do it with Jesus. "Jesus, you didn't really affirm the Biblical ethic that I shouldn't have sex with someone I'm not married to. Did you? Jesus, you didn't really mean love those enemies- the ones who look and vote differently than me. Did you? Jesus, you didn't really mean obey my parents when I'm a teenager? Did you?" But here's what we learn when we observe Jesus. When you question Jesus, you'll find that it's Jesus who's questioning you.

There is a good place for asking questions about Jesus. Are His claims true? Did He really rise from the grave? What do these hard teachings mean? That's good. But if you're questioning is you trying to assert your own authority. Let me warn you right now. You will find that Jesus is questioning you. He will ask if *you* really can identify the Messiah on your own. If *you* really know how holy God is. If *you* really know what Heaven and Hell are like. If *you* use your authority only for good. To serve. To love. And how would you answer? Probably by texting IDK. I don't know.

Let's be humble people. Especially those of us who have any sort of authority in the local church. Let's observe Jesus. Let's let Him teach us. Let's acknowledge that we don't know. Let's watch Jesus in the gospels. Let's notice how he loves. Let's also notice how He uses His authority. He could call on angels or merely speak a word and they would be vaporized. He has that kind of authority. But He uses His authority like a shepherd who sees lost sheep. He teaches them. He has compassion on them. He's patient with them. But He also doesn't shy away from speaking the truth.

Proverbs 29:25 tells us that

The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is safe.

And that's what we see in these verses. The religious leaders were laying a trap for Jesus. But their fear of man. Their concern for the opinions of others. It has

become a trap for them. They were putting the cheese or peanut butter down, but Jesus sprung it on them. It's their fingers that are broken. This will eventually happen to everyone who tries to please man. So if you have politicians or pastors who never make some people upset you are in trouble. They don't need to go looking for fights, but there should be times when they don't back down. Pray for us.

Jesus was safe from this trap the way we don't fear man by trusting the Father. That's safe. If you fear displeasing God more than you fear displeasing man, you'll be free. You'll accept God's authority, and you'll be able to make steps in overcoming fear of man.

Yield to Jesus authority. We've looked at Jesus' Authority in Action. Now let's look, at

[Main Point 2] Jesus' Authority in Story

We all need stories to make sense of the world. Stories are subversive. They're powerful. They enter our hearts and minds through side doors and reveal things without us often realizing it. So stories are important, and Jesus knows how to use them to reveal His authority. And stories always have beginnings, climaxes, and endings. Let's start at the beginning.

[Subpoint 1] Authority in a story beginning with patience

Let's read vv. 9-13

And he began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.'

How patient should you be with a violent and abusive employee? They start assaulting their supervisors and co-workers. Keep them for a week? Give them a chance- maybe a month or two. A year seems like too much. But here, in Jesus'

story, Jesus is recounting Israel's history. And the scribes know this. Jesus is basically just restating 2 Chronicles 36:15-16- the last chapter of their bibles. Over five centuries of God patiently sending His servants the prophets into the vineyard He planted. Israel. That vineyard imagery for Israel is all over the place in the Old Testament. And always, the prophets are rejected, ignored, assaulted, and even killed. Over 500 years. The authoritative One is far more patient than we would be. And Jesus is telling us a story to see this.

Stories have beginnings. Jesus' story about authority has a beginning. Stories also have a climax. So let's notice that next.

[Subpoint 2] Authority in a story climaxing with answers

The leaders have asked Jesus where His authority comes from. And Jesus answers that question in this story. Let's read vv. 13 through the beginning of v. 15

Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.' But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.' And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

Readers of Luke's gospel like us, we've read chapter 3 where the Heavens were opened at Jesus' baptism. And God spoke from Heaven affirming Jesus as His Beloved Son. And we've read how Jesus read Isaiah about the Spirit of the Lord being on Him. So we know that Jesus' authority has come from God. But if the religious leaders have missed all this, Jesus tells this story in a way that answers their questions. Jesus is the Son. He was sent from the Father. He has the authority of the Father. He has God's authority. But that answer doesn't satisfy people who won't yield to Jesus' authority.

[Gospel] Jesus is answering the question of authority in the climax of this story. But the climax is something else. All of these centuries God has patiently sent His servants. But the vineyard workers reject the owner's authority again and again. So He sends His only Son. We know He's the only Son because the tenants believe that He's the only one standing in the way of them inheriting control of the vineyard. What more could He give? Who would better picture this patient landowner than His Son? What an honor to receive the heir. And when we yield

to Jesus' authority, we're not yielding to an abuser or a despot. You're yielding to the One who came to die for you.

[Illustration] When I worked at fast-food type restaurant known as *Mango Joe's* at SeaWorld, August A. Busch would come in every month or so. August A. Busch is the Great-great-grandson of Anheuser-Busch's founder. Even someone like me, who could care less about beer companies, found it humbling to watch him walk next to me while I was prepping food. Wow! Right there. We were all to be on our best behavior. We were all to be respectful. We were all to be of service. He had the authority to fire any one of us on the spot. He could shut down *Mango Joe's*. He could shut down SeaWorld. He had that sort of authority as the heir of Adolphus Busch.

But the climax of Jesus' story does not result in welcoming. Or humbling. The climax is an act of murder. It's seeing the heir and wanting Him dead. And then being so blinded and stupid as to think that the owner would then divest ownership to the murderers of His Son. And that is the story of Jesus' death. And that's the story of how evil, and stupid, and blind humans are. We hate authority, so we want authorities to die. Jesus' story is coming shortly before His death. He knows this conflict with the religious leaders will lead to His death. But Jesus knew that He had to die. The cross was necessary. It was always meant to happen. Were people acting freely and sinning freely? Yes. But was this predestined? Was this orchestrated to fulfill God's plans? Yes. Jesus had to die.

He had to die because He had to represent God perfectly. And the way humans, in our fallen sinful nature, always respond to God's authority is by wanting to shake it off. To get out from under it. To remove it. To kill Him. So God made this happen. For fun? Oh no. Because Jesus' death would also save people. His death would be as a substitute. So Jesus' authority is also answering questions that these people aren't asking: How to know God. How to be saved from judgment. And what has happened to our sin. If you are here and you have stopped trying to constantly ignore God's authority. You've sought to really believe that His rules are the right rules. You've come to realize that your anti-authority attitude deserves Hell. And you've put your trust in Jesus. This climax is a climax because you don't need to suffer an eternal death. He died as your substitute. So that you can live. So Jesus is significant. So the cross is the climax. The cross is significant.

The cross is necessary. There's no way to live and no hope to have without it. And it reveals His authority and how He uses it.

Jesus's authority is being revealed through this story. The story has a beginning-one that's full of patience. It has a climax- that brings answers. But all stories have endings too.

[Subpoint 3] Authority in a story ending with judgment

Let's read the last part of v. 15-v. 19.

And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others." When they heard this, they said, "Surely not!" But he looked directly at them and said, "What then is this that is written:

"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone"? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him." The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on him at that very hour, for they perceived that he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people.

[Tile setting] When I worked with my contractor father laying tile. One of the things we'd do before putting a single piece down would be to find a point of intersection square with the entrance to a room and make right triangle that had sides of 3 feet, four feet, and five feet. If those measurements didn't come out exactly, the right angle wasn't perfect and we couldn't depend on square angles. We had to get it right. We rejected any tile that strayed from that line. It was that important.

That's what a Cornerstone was for a building, but even more important because it supported massive levels of weight. It was very carefully chosen. It was essential to the whole edifice of the structure. And Jesus is the cornerstone.

If you don't yield to Jesus' authority. If you resist Him. If you partake in putting Him to death by refusing to admit that you are wrong. If you continue to willingly persist in sin by ignoring Him. You are setting yourself up as a rival authority. And you will be crushed. You are like these tenants. You are committing spiritual suicide. You think resisting Jesus will bring you freedom or ease. It will bring you

death. Luke wrote His gospel so that you would have certainty. He wants you to be certain that you will be saved if you yield to Jesus' authority. He wants you to be certain that you will be crushed and shattered and pulverized and blown to smithereens by the cornerstone in an endless eternal cycle in Hell forever.

Jesus is also teaching something remarkable here when He claims to be the cornerstone. By rejecting God's Son. He is saying that the Jewish nation and leadership are forfeiting their unique claims to God's favor. This is unfathomable to them. Psalm 118 was David being surrounded by Gentiles, people who hated and rejected Jews and their King. But David was saying that God had chosen him to lead the Jews to build His Kingdom. Now Jesus is turning that on its head. This passage that would have been used to be self-righteous condemns them because they don't know who the real cornerstone is. Now it's not the Gentiles who are on the outside, now it's the Jews who reject Jesus on the outside all because they refuse to yield to Jesus' authority.

[Application] As a king exercises his authority through the laws written in His name. Jesus as God exercises His authority through the law of God. The reason we try to preach texts in order is how we try to honor and yield to Jesus' authority. Where do you know you're not yielding to authority. Let me give some common ones I've noticed in my life. I won't yield to Jesus when His law commands me to forgive others. I won't yield to Jesus when He tells me to love my enemies. I won't yield to Jesus when His law tells me I should not have sex with my girlfriend or boyfriend. I won't yield to Jesus when His law tells me I should have sex with my wife or husband. I won't yield to Jesus in believing that God wants men to lead in marriage and the church. I won't yield to Jesus when He tells me that women are equal in value as men. I won't yield to Jesus and believe that Hell is real and that only Christians avoid it. I won't yield to Jesus when He says we're saved by grace alone- I demand others work and live up to my standards.

[Conclusion] There are a couple yield signs just down the street, and on my drives and walks, I watch people blow through them without really looking. And every several months there's a bang or pieces of cars from a collision. And one thing I've noticed if the crash has just happened, the people nearby come out of their homes and watch. There's not a lot more shameful than having people just stare at you, when you've done something stupid and you have nowhere to go to hide.

When you've just made a stupid mistake like not yielding? The shame! But notice what happens when you yield to Jesus' authority in 1 Peter 2:6-

For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."