

Matt 28

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Preacher: Tony Hutter

[0 : 00] There is something in all of us that simply does not like to be told what to do.

I think you'd agree with that. We do not want to submit to authority. Perhaps we sense a surge of that spirit when we hear a song like Frank Sinatra's keynote song.

You'll know it, My Way. I did it, My Way. Many people these days in choosing secular songs rather than hymns at funeral services.

You may have heard about that. In fact, I heard on the radio a few years ago that one of the most popular songs played at a funeral service these days is My Way.

I did it, My Way. Nobody else's way, not God's way. And I'm defiant to the end, to the final curtain. Regrets, I've had a few, but too few to mention.

[1 : 06] I did it My Way. Can you imagine someone going before God? Because we all have to appear before God one day, going before God and saying, I did it not your way, but my way.

I mean, what a terrible thing to have to say to God on that last day, the great day of judgment. The truth is we don't like being told what to do.

By parents, by teachers, by bosses, by politicians, by the government, by policemen. And ultimately, we don't like being told what to do by God himself.

God is the one authority above all other authorities. The supreme authority. The authority which gives authority to all other human authorities.

Why is that? Why don't we like this God telling us what to do? Well, because we are sinful creatures, fallen creatures. Rebellion against rightful authority is part of our human makeup.

[2 : 16] Now, with those thoughts in mind, let's turn to that chapter that was read to us earlier. If you've got your Bible with you, do please turn to it. It's the Gospel of Matthew. It's the very last chapter, chapter 28.

The situation here is that Jesus has died. He died upon the cross. He died bearing the sins of his people.

He was making atonement for them. He was dying there, bearing sin in his own body on the tree. Taking the punishment, taking the wrath of God against sin.

And he died. He was truly, really, literally dead. And then on the third day, he comes back from the dead. And this is the glorious message of Easter, of course.

He is risen. The one who is dead, buried, is now alive. And alive forevermore. But he is not to remain in this world, in his resurrection body.

[3 : 16] No, he's going to return to his Father in heaven. And the last glimpse we have of him in Matthew's Gospel is from that mountaintop. And he's going to leave his disciples.

What will be his parting message? With what words will he leave them? And there they are in the last three verses of the chapter. Let me read them to you.

Verses 18 to 20. Verse 18. Then Jesus came to them and said, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely I will be with you always to the very end of the age. Here we have the great claim, the great commission, and the great comfort.

[4 : 19] The great commission is to go into all the world and preach the gospel, the good news to everybody. The great comfort is that he will be with his disciples as they go out and do that.

But it's the great claim that we're going to think about this morning. And there it is at the end of verse 18. The words of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, All authority, he says, in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Jesus speaks of authority. Now, as we said a moment ago, that is the very thing with which we have a problem. We do not like authority.

Or at least we do not like other people having authority. It's all right when I've got authority. I've not got a problem with that. But when other people have authority and tell me what to do, that's where the problem starts.

But here Jesus claims to have authority. In fact, he claims to have all authority. Let's think about that further than this morning.

[5 : 31] Let's make a few points about it. And the first is this, authority claimed. Authority claimed. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me, he says.

What a simple statement that is. And yet how profound and majestic. How far-reaching it is. It is one of Christ's greatest statements. Maybe the greatest statement, the greatest claim ever made by anyone. Can you think of anyone in all the history of the world who has made such an all-embracing claim as this?

This man Jesus. Who is not only man, he is God as well. This man Jesus stands before his disciple and says all authority in all places at all times is mine.

Tremendous. Now, of course, during his ministry, Jesus made some most amazing claims. In fact, those claims tend to expand as time went by.

[6 : 42] At the outset, he claims to have authority on earth to forgive sins. That's quite a claim, isn't it? But he made it.

As the days pass, so Jesus claims authority as the final judge of all men. And then immediately before going to the cross, he speaks of authority given to him over all people.

But now, this matter of claiming things makes its greatest appeal. And we see the greatest and most magnificent claim of all.

All authority here, there, and everywhere is mine, he says. Maybe what Christ claims here goes beyond anything that the apostle Paul wrote of him.

Now, if you know anything about the letters of Paul, you know that Paul made some tremendous claims for the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says he is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of the whole creation.

[7 : 51] He says, In him, in Christ, all things have been created, whether things in heaven or on earth, whether thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers. All things were created by him.

All things were created through him. All things were created for his own glory. By him, all things, says Paul, consist and uphold together.

There will be no continuing existence of anything without Christ doing it, sustaining it. And Paul says, This man, Jesus Christ, the God-man, has been given a name which is above every name. That at this name, every knee will bow, every tongue confess. Now, those are magnificent. Statements. But maybe this text of ours is the pinnacle, where Jesus himself says, All authority is mine.

Never did man speak like this man. Never did a man make a claim like this claim. Dictators have made some very bold claims, but this surpasses them all.

[9 : 03] He's either mad, or he's bad, or his claim is true and he's God. But he's not bad.

And he's not bad. You look at the gospel story, and you see him going around doing good, harming no one. So you say he's not bad. So the conclusion is this.

He is who he claims to be. He is God. God. And his claim is genuine. He refers to authority.

All authority, he says, has been given to me. What does that mean? Well, it's not just the ability to do something. It's that, but it's more than that. It is the right to do something as well.

It is right and power. He has the right, and he has the might. And his might backs up his right.

[10 : 02] He has authority. Essentially, we could define it as the freedom to do whatever he wishes. It's freedom without limitation, without boundary.

Jesus Christ is free to do what he wants, where he wants, with what he wants, to whomever he wants.

It is absolute freedom of choice and action. He claims unrestricted, inexhaustible, universal sovereignty. What did he mean?

Let's boil it down to this. Very simply, what did Jesus Christ mean? In just a few words, he meant this. I'm in control.

I am in control. When we try to think of what is meant by this, we realise that the human mind loses itself in seeking to understand all that is involved in this simple statement.

[11 : 09] Gigantic vistas begin to open out before us which are unbounded and limitless. All authority is mine, he says. We begin to realise that Jesus isn't a warm, fuzzy buddy who has some nice ideas as to how to make your life a little easier, a little better, how to make you a little bit happier.

No, he is Lord. He is sovereign. He is almighty. We come back to a basic, fundamental, but stupendous confession of faith, one that every Christian subscribes to and believes Jesus is Lord. What do we believe? What's our creed? What's our confession? What's our statement of faith? Jesus is Lord.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given, he says, to me. Secondly, notice authority given. Authority given. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

We ask the question, well, where did he get this authority? It came to him from whom? And the answer is, of course, from God the Father.

[12 : 42] No one but the Father could have given him this authority. In fact, the claim goes back to a promise. Way back in the book of Psalms.

Almost at the beginning of the book of Psalms, in Psalm 2 and verse 8, we read these words. Psalm 2 and verse 8, and it's God the Father speaking here, ask of me and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.

So, it's as though the Father there looks at his eternal Son and he says, all you need do is ask and I will give you. What will I give you?

I will give you everything. this world that I'm creating, this galaxy, this, my creation, I'll give it to you. And so, when Jesus makes the claim there in Matthew 28, he is saying, the promise of my Father is being fulfilled. Someone said this, he was given heaven and earth to do what he liked with them.

[14 : 01] Here, says the Father, here they are, I give them to you, do with them as you wish, as you will. Authority given. Thirdly, notice authority now.

Authority now. He says, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. He doesn't say all authority will be given to me. He says, it has been given, it is mine, he claims, at this very moment in time.

I stand before you, he says, and now I exercise this authority. I'm not waiting for it, it's mine. The disciples are not sent out in order to gain power and authority for Christ.

He has it as he speaks to them. And we are not sent out as we sometimes say, to win the world for Christ. There is one sense in which we do that, but not strictly speaking.

In the strictest sense, he has the world now. He doesn't have to ascend to the throne, he has already ascended there. He's not waiting to be crowned, he is crowned.

[15 : 11] Lord of lords and king of kings. Certainly, that sovereignty and that authority is not acknowledged by most people today, sadly. The world has always been in rebellion against the rightful authority of Christ, but he is Lord.

As you sit in this building this morning, recognise this fact, that Jesus Christ is Lord. He has authority and power now.

And one day, that authority will be acknowledged and submitted to by everyone without exception. Every knee will bow to him and every tongue confess that he is Lord.

Lord. But make no mistake, he has this power and this authority now. When you come to think of it, that's great news, isn't it? If you're a believer here this morning, that's good news, isn't it?

The one who is your saviour and your friend is the one who is out there ruling. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is looked down upon.

[16 : 27] Christians are despised these days. It doesn't matter what we believe, it doesn't matter what we say, the government's going ahead with this and the world is going ahead with that. They don't care about us and they don't care about the Lord Jesus and they don't care about God.

But as we live our Christian lives, we know that our saviour is Lord. He has this authority now. We face the world knowing that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to our Jesus.

Then in the fourth place, notice authority in heaven. All authority, he says, in heaven has been given to me. All power of any kind that has to do with heavenly things and heavenly places is in the hands of Christ.

he has authority over the angels. He has authority over the cherubim and the seraphim and all the other angelic creatures. In heaven, he has authority over all who are there.

Those angels, for example, continually praise and worship the Lord Jesus and they serve him and they recognize his authority and submit to him in all things.

[17 : 46] He has authority in heaven. Who else is in heaven? Countless believers. Can you think of some of them?

You can, can't you? Some of you can picture Christians, believers, who have gone before you. You can still see them with your mind's eye.

You can still hear their voice. And some of them were very precious to you in days gone by. Where are they now? They're in heaven. What are they doing now?

They're submitting to the authority of the Lord Jesus with great delight and great joy. Because Jesus Christ has authority in heaven. And they're pleased about that.

And they're enjoying his company there. In the fifth place, authority on earth. Authority on earth. He says, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

[18 : 46] Earlier in his ministry, Jesus displayed amazing authority. He speaks and illnesses and diseases vanish.

He speaks and demons flee and run away. He speaks and sins are forgiven and pardoned. He speaks and winds and storms are stilled.

He speaks and men say, with what authority he preaches. And he even claimed to have the power, the authority to lay down his life and to take it again.

Now think about that. Jesus Christ could voluntarily lay down his life. We can't do that. I suppose you could say you could commit suicide.

That's not the same thing. But Jesus deliberately gave his spirit to the father. It was an act of his. He had the power, the authority to do that.

[19 : 47] A power and authority that we don't have. And then he said, still more amazingly, he said, I have the very same power and authority to take back my life. I've got the power to give it, I've got the power to take it back again.

That's what he did. Matthew 28, he's alive again. How so? Because he took his life back. He had the power to do it. So you see this authority in all the things that he did during his life and during his ministry.

But now, he says here, all authority on earth has been given to me. He has authority in all places. He has authority in all the universe. Every imaginable corner of the universe, there is not a square inch over which Jesus does not say mine.

He claims it all. And he is free to exercise that authority, however he chooses. All authority is his. No one can withstand the authority of Jesus Christ.

[20 : 54] No one is outside his authority. He has authority over men and nations. Think of all those world leaders who have authority. Kings and queens, prime ministers and presidents, dictators and generals.

They walk the world stage, don't they? They make their pronouncements and people take notice. They are famous. Sometimes they are infamous.

But Christ claims here to have authority over them all. There is no one who can withstand that authority. There is no one who can question what he does.

There is no one from whom he seeks counsel or guidance as to what he ought to do. Total, complete, sovereign authority. All authority is mine, he says, on earth.

All authority over good and evil. All authority over cancer and heart disease. All authority over the earth and the moon and the sun and the solar system and the milky way and the billions of galaxies.

[22 : 02] All authority over all. What a claim. It's mind expanding, isn't it? It stretches our minds further than they can go.

But that's what he claims. In the sixth place, authority accepted. Authority accepted. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me, he says.

Now, let's make it personal. Because that's what we've got to do. We're not just fitting our minds with information, with knowledge.

No, we're making it personal because God wants to make it personal. Christ makes this claim. And if we are believers, we know it's true.

We accept it as being true. And this is a cause for rejoicing. It's good news. It's good news that all power and all authority are in the hands of Christ and not in the hands of anybody else.

[23 : 11] Would you like those things, that authority to be in the hands of anyone else? Of course not. Spurgeon, we referred to Spurgeon, Spurgeon said this, do we not feel ready to shout hallelujah, hallelujah, when we know that this is really the fact.

All authority is mine. Therefore, we know that it will be rightly used. Power in the hands of some people is dangerous.

History teaches us that again and again. We could mention people who've been given authority and the result has been disastrous. But no one can better use authority than Christ.

Let him do what he will and we know it will be good. For he cannot do anything but that which is right and true, just and good. But this does not mean that life will always be easy for us.

We receive, as we well know, some hard knocks and some baffling challenges in life. Problems confront us. Illnesses assail us.

[24 : 24] Disappointments frustrate us. At such times we find comfort, don't we, in the fact that Jesus has all authority. Isn't that good to know?

Isn't it good for you to know as a believer that Jesus Christ is in control of your life? Are you facing a problem at this moment in time?

some physical illness maybe, some spiritual problem? You're in the hands of Christ, aren't you? And Christ has all authority, all power.

Isn't that great to know? The one who loves you, who loved you so much that he died upon the cross for you. He is the one who holds you in his hand and he knows best and his will is best.

You must believe that because it's true. All authority is his, that's good. And his authority covers your little life.

[25 : 23] You're one amongst billions, aren't you? You're just an ordinary person, nothing special, not influential in this life, but Christ knows you, Christ loves you and he's working out all things for your good and he's in control.

And we can go to him as well. Although he has all authority and he's up there, seated upon the throne, yet nevertheless he is easy to access.

We can go to him. You can't go to other people in authority in this world, can you? Those human leaders. You can't go and speak to David, the prime minister.

Down in London, you cannot go and have a chat with the queen. You can't see all these people just when you want to, but this saviour, this lord, you can go and see, speak to, have fellowship with, any time you like.

The door is open. The door into the presence of God. The throne room is always open. So, authority accepted.

[26 : 33] Now, in the seventh place, let's notice authority obeyed. Authority obeyed. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. And we might have thought, now, if all power is Christ's, we have no need to do anything.

He will do it all. We'll just sit back and look at him and everything will be fine. We might have expected him to say that. All authority is mine, therefore, just sit back and watch me.

I'll do everything. But he doesn't say that, does he? In fact, notice how verse 19 follows on.

Verse 18, he says, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. And then verse 19 says this, therefore, therefore, go and make disciples of all nations and so on.

All power is mine, therefore, do something. because I've got the authority, you go out in my name with my authority and do what I want you to do, preach the gospel.

[27 : 39] Notice the order. Before telling us to do anything for him, he tells us what he can do for us. In fact, verse 19 makes no sense without verse 18.

How can this small band of uninfluential and unindulgent educated people go out into this dark and sinful world and evangelise? They can't do it unless the one with all authority goes with them and helps them.

And that's what he does. Those few disciples needed the truth of our text before they could begin to go out and do anything for the saviour. So the great commission is based upon the great claim.

authority obeyed. And we must place ourselves in the place of obedience and submission. If Christ has all authority, we must happily and voluntarily position ourselves under that authority.

And now we want to expand our little creed. What was our creed? Do you remember what it was? Jesus is Lord. That's good. That's fine. That's the truth. But let's expand it just a little bit and let's expand it to this.

[29 : 00] Jesus is my Lord. Otherwise we're just dealing with generalities. We're just dealing with theological truth which is fine but we need something more personal so we expand it and we say Jesus is my Lord.

Can you say that in your heart this morning? As a believer you must be able to say it. Jesus is my Lord. He has all authority. I believe that.

I submit to it. Authority obeyed. We must say if we've never said it before Jesus take over. Take me. It's as though you say to the Lord look here are the keys. The keys to my life. Take these keys. I don't want them any longer. You take them. You be in charge.

Authority obeyed. I've got one last point and it's this. Authority revealed. Authority revealed. Jesus says all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

[30 : 07] There's a day coming when Christ comes with the fullness of his authority. When he collects the kingdoms of the world to himself and when he purges out all that is evil and godless and Christ rejecting.

In the book of Revelation in chapter 11 and verse 15 it says this. Revelation chapter 11 and verse 15. The seventh angel sounded his trumpet and there were loud voices in heaven.

Quite a noise going on. We said the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he will reign forever and ever.

Authority revealed. All the kingdoms of this world will come to an end and as we said earlier every knee will bow to the Lord Jesus Christ and every tongue will acknowledge that he is the one with all authority.

All people all people mark this will confess that our text is true. So what should we do?

[31 : 32] Obey Christ. Do what he says. Remember he is Lord. Lord. But maybe you're not a Christian here this morning.

You're not a believer. What ought you to do? As we begin to close, please take note of this if you are not convinced in your heart that you are a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, that your sins are forgiven and that you're on your way to heaven.

If you don't know these things, if you're not certain about these things, then listen very carefully.

What must you do? Submit to the Lord Jesus Christ.

You see, you're not going to alter him and you're not going to change this text of ours and its truth. Jesus says, all authority is mine and that is a fact.

Whatever you do about it, whatever you say about it, it is a fact. And one day, please believe this, one day you will stand before him and you will have to give an account to him of the way you lived your life.

[32 : 48] Now, there are two ways you can live your life. You can live without him or you can live with him. If you live without him, you're saying, I do not believe in this authority and I'm not going to do what you say.

I will do it my way. And you'll appear before Jesus Christ, your judge, and you'll have to say that in all honesty.

He knows it and you know it in your heart, but what a terrible thing to have to say. Or on the other hand, you can say, yes, Jesus Christ is the saviour, I believe that.

He must be my saviour too. And I believe he's the Lord, he must be my Lord too. you can submit to him and you can do it this morning. The Bible says there are two things you must do, repent and believe, putting it simply, turn and trust.

And if you've never done that this morning, you have an opportunity to do it now. You know you need to. You know you ought to. The whole Bible screams at you from beginning to end, trust in Jesus Christ, otherwise you're lost.

[34 : 06] And maybe the Lord is working in your heart this morning, turning you from that way, the selfish way, the way that goes downhill, to that way, that way which brings you to God, which brings you to Christ, which brings you ultimately to heaven.

Maybe the Holy Spirit of God is working in your heart this morning, turning you. And all you need to do is say, yes Lord, Lord, I trust you.

I trust your death upon the cross to deal with my sin. I trust you to take control. Will you do it this morning if you've never done it before?

Here are the keys, the keys to my life. I give them to you. Jesus says, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

May we all believe that and live in the light of it. Father, we thank you that your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, has all power and all authority in heaven and on earth.

[35 : 17] Lord, we pray these things might be impressed upon our minds and hearts and we pray too, Lord, that as we part, we might do so with your blessing, the blessing of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.