

The Basis of Authority

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon explores the authority of Christ given to believers and the importance of spiritual preparation through prayer and fasting to overcome challenges in faith.

Duration: 35:17

Scripture: Matthew 17:1-21, Mark 9:14-29

Topics: "Authority"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain and how it contrasts with the disciples' inability to help a demon-possessed boy in the valley. The preacher emphasizes that Jesus was not only transfigured on the mountain but also at the cross, where he encountered Satan. The sermon references Matthew 17 and Mark 9, where Jesus heals the boy possessed by a dumb spirit. The preacher explains that the darkness surrounding the cross represents hell moving in to destroy the Son of God, and highlights the three worlds involved in Jesus' death: the world of angry men, the world of Satan, and the world of God.

Transcript

Our meditation this morning shall be found in Matthew 17, the portion that was read for us. And I would appreciate it if you would turn. Thank you.

I would appreciate it if you would turn. There is a collateral scripture that I will turn to, you needn't bother. I'm reading it simply that you may have a little additional light on it.

It's Mark, the ninth chapter and verses beginning with the 14th verse. And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed and running to him, saluted him.

And he asked the scribes, what question ye with them? And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit. And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him, and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away. And I speak to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not.

He answered him and said, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him. And when he saw him straightway, the spirit tear

him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed foaming.

And he asked his father, how long is it to go since this came upon him? And he said, of a child. And oft times it had cast him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him. But if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us.

Jesus saith unto him, if thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running to gather, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him and enter no more into him.

And the spirit cried and rent him sore and came out of him. And he was as one dead, insomuch that many said he is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, why could not we cast him out? And he saith unto them, this kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting. Now back to Matthew 17, if you please. Verses 14, the first 13 verses have to do with our Lord's transfiguration on the mountaintop.

Our Lord is transfigured and the disciples are powerless. What a pathetic contrast. Peter, James, and John see the Lord and with him, Moses and Elijah.

And they hear the voice of God saying, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. And the nine down in the valley in the place of need are unable to cope with this. And the father is prepared to go back in defeat and failure carrying his demented son, his demon possessed son, back with him.

But how wonderful it is that our Lord was transfigured, not only that he was transfigured on the mountain, but that he was also transfigured, if I may use the word, at the cross. For it was at the cross of Calvary that our Lord Jesus encountered Satan. You must realize that when our Lord died, there were three worlds involved in his death.

I have mentioned this in the past, but it is relevant. It is pertinent today. First, there was the world of wicked men who far exceeded, I believe the expectation and desire of Satan.

Satan's desire had been that Christ should turn himself over to Satan in return for the world, that he should cast himself down from the mountaintop or that he should be turned stones into bread and thus violate the will of his father. He wanted to destroy the Lord by our Lord's consent, just in the same way that he wants to destroy you and me by our consent and our participation, because it makes the shame on the Lord Jesus so much the greater. But our Lord resisted, as you know, and he committed himself to the father, who in turn committed his son to men.

And I believe that wicked men, that the Pharisees, far exceeded the desire of Satan. For the scripture says, had Satan realized that the princes of this world known what was going to take place, they never would have crucified the Son of God. You recall that there was an occasion when Pilate's wife wrote to Pilate and said, have nothing to do with this just man, because I have suffered many things in a dream because of him.

Now from whom came that dream and that vision? From the father? No, our Lord Jesus said, for this hour I have come into the world. I must need suffer many things and die and be raised from the dead. Do you

think that it was the father giving vision to Pilate's wife that would stop the Lord Jesus from going to the cross? No, I think perhaps the best explanation would be that the Pilate's wife had been the instrument that Satan sought to use to keep the Lord Jesus from this kind of a death.

He wanted to destroy him, but not there. But at length our Lord went to the cross and he went there, of course, because of the anger of men. But in his going, in his being carried there, then at the third hour you find that all of darkness surrounds the cross.

Many are the expositors and with them I agree that this darkness represents hell moving up to this place of conflict and seeing the Lord Jesus carried there by the wrath and the anger of men, now it is that Satan comes with all the hosts of hell to finally destroy the Son of God. And so for three hours the cross scene is shrouded and we only see into it by the inspired utterances of the prayer of the psalmist in Psalm 22 and Psalm 38 and others of the messianic Psalms in which we have some insight into what took place. You recall how that in Psalm 22 he speaks of the bulls of Bashan, the dogs tearing at him, the lion roaring, and all of these symbolisms would speak to us of Satan.

And so I say we have three worlds gathered at the cross. First is the world of men, angry men that see the Lord Jesus as a threat to their pecuniary success. Our Lord said you must be born again, you must have a supernatural encounter with God, life must be imparted sovereignly from God or else you're not qualified to be participate in my church.

Now the Pharisees were orthodox as we've seen, they possessed ritual ceremony, discipline, they were separated in many respects that we would fail to be the most devout of us. And yet our Lord said accept your righteousness, exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven. When he made that statement he declared open war upon them and they upon him.

They once and for all disqualified them as instructors in the matter of eternal life, guides to lead one to heaven. He said they don't have the answer and they don't know how. You can't trust them, they have not themselves the life of which they speak and they have no means of guiding you to possess it.

You will have to come to me and I will give you a gratuitously freely of myself something that you never can earn by subscribing to the teachings and doctrines of the Pharisees. Well when that happened then it was just a matter of time until they'd have to get rid of him. He stood in the way of their religious success, their whole status was associated with their position, their money and their income was associated with their position, religion was their business and here was this vigorous keen young man that was capturing the enthusiasm and the loyalty of the common people and if he were allowed to continue undoubtedly they would suffer and so they took the path that seemed the wisest and determined to do away with him.

This was angry men dealing with the son of God, representing your heart and mine in our natural unregenerate state for men are by nature haters of God but then we also know that at the cross was the father. The father saw Christ as you and he dealt with his son as he must deal with you and his wrath upon your sin was poured out upon his son and so the father is there at the cross viewing the Lord Jesus as your representative and as your substitute. You are there in Christ.

The father has accepted Christ as you, as your bona fide legal representative and so when you view Calvary savingly you must see it the way the father saw it. The father saw Christ as you and dealt with Christ as he must deal with you. You're only participate in the benefits of the cross when you come and see Christ as you dying your death under the sentence of your sins as your representative paying your

price and so we have this aspect of the cross but then there is the third.

There is that sense in which the Lord Jesus Christ was known to be God. The demons said we know who thou art thou son of David art thou come to judge us before the time. They knew him to be God.

Satan in his hours of or days of temptation dealt with him as God and so now he is vulnerable laden with your sins as it were the willing victim of the wrath of men. God putting your sins upon his son and men putting their wrath upon the son. Now he is vulnerable and so from 12 until three on that day hell comes up from the nether regions and focuses there around the cross and everything that satan wanted to do when he said I will be like the most high he now is doing.

You've heard me say that there was the battle between love and light and life and truth and that the weapons hate satan used were the exact opposites hatred and darkness and death and the lie and all that satan was came against all that God is and there was battle when there wasn't a thing more that satan can do when all the hosts of hell all the demons of the pit all the princes of darkness have exhausted all the weapons in their arsenal of evil then our Lord Jesus Christ could say and not until then it's finished when evil men had done to him all that they wanted to do when God had done to him all that your sins demanded that he do and when satan and the hosts of hell had done to Christ all that they desired to do then and then only our Lord Jesus said it is finished. Why? Because the three enemies that we have the world the flesh and God's wrath and anger against our sin now had all been dealt with. Now with this as the that which is to take place our Lord has taken his disciples with him to the mountain and he's been transfigured before them they see his glory subsequently he's transfigured again made sin for us and now he is enthroned at the right hand of the father on the throne on high and there in the presence of God today is the Lord Jesus Christ who has conquered the world the flesh and the devil and is there as your representative.

Now we understand this text that we are have before us which I have no intention to expound from the standpoint of an exegetical exposition I want to lift out of it the heart of as I understand the heart of meaning for you in your life in your needs and in your responsibilities. Now this obviously was before the cross but our Lord Jesus gave to his disciples authority to cast out devils when he sent forth the 70 on the basis of that victory which he had won and was to secure. We are now standing on the other side of Calvary therefore I shall have to if I am to make this carry the meaning that I intend have you see the parallel between their relationship to Christ then and your relationship to Christ now they were called by the Lord they were sent as his servants they were sent in his name they were given authority to do what he would do and they used this authority they came back reporting how that even the devils were subject to them and came out.

Now if you were to go to Ephesians the first chapter and study that latter portion from verse 15 carefully you would see that there is in this matter of your union with Christ far more than deliverance from the penalty of sin I've already established I trust that when Christ died for you the father was dealing with him as you and you benefit from his death when you see that he was there in your place instead but you must understand that there's more involved in this if you please than what you get out of it too many people are interested only in what they get out of the work of Christ there's also interest that he has so when you were in Christ when you were in Christ when he as your substitute died for you then it could truly be said that what happened to Christ was happening to you we

see this for we are told in Romans 6 6 that we are crucified with Christ when Christ died you died he was your substitute your representative he was doing this as you not only for you but as you so that when he died you died in Romans 6 4 we are told that we are buried with him by baptism into death that as Christ was buried for us he was also buried as us and we were thus buried with him then we also know that he was quicken for us he died in our place he was quicken for us but since he was our substitute he was quicken as us and then we were quicken with him we are told that he was raised up for our justification but he was raised up for us yes but since he was our substitute he was raised up as us and then that means of course that we were raised up with him now come back again to the

next aspect of this he hath quickened us together with Christ hath raised us up together and hath made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ so it was the Lord Jesus Christ was ascended into heaven and sat down the right hand of the throne on high and there he shall reign until he has put all enemies under his feet but if it is true that we were with him when he was crucified will it not be true that we were with him also and in him when he was enthroned and this we must understand and so if you are to correctly understand what the word of God teaches you as a believer regarding your present relationship it is that you are seated together in the heavenlies in Christ the word states it just as clearly as it can be possibly be stated that he has raised us up together and made us sit

together in the heavenlies in Christ now in the eyes of the father just as you were on the cross in him and with him when he died so you are on the throne in him and with him as he reigns it's very difficult for us to comprehend that but nevertheless this is exactly what the scripture teaches and this is the reason why the church must work in with carnal weapons at such a poor dying rate because it has not seen that he has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies and not until we enter into that a relationship with him that he intended in the do we become equipped with us those weapons which are not carnal but are mighty to the tearing down of strongholds now we go back again to this situation here we find a company of people that were given authority nine of his

disciples and the man brings his son to them and he asks them to deliver his son from this dumb spirit that has been in the child since an infant has caused him to be cast into the fire burned and hurt and injured and the disciples are unable to do to do it there seem to be quite impotent in the face of this need and our lord the first thing that he said when they learned that his disciples had not succeeded was this all faithless and perverse generation how long shall i be with you how long shall i suffer you bring him hither to me the problem was the demon-possessed world oh if you can understand and realize that this father with his little boy and the power of of satan is a picture of the unbelieving world part careless and part hostile and being brought to a half-believing church

can't you see it let me draw it for you again here is the boy torn by this evil spirit picturing the world into the control of its god satan which has blinded the minds of them which believe not brought to the apostles which speak of the church and so you have a half-believing church that is impotent in the face of great need ministering for a sovereign lord that's been transfigured and unable to help the world that's bound in the powers of satanic darkness and this is the testimony of some 18th centuries how different when you go back and study the record of those first centuries in the church as in the in the scriptures we have it in the book of acts then of the sub-apostolic writings the testimony that we have how completely different it is poor human nature represented by this little

child is left in dumb helpless misery because the church has failed to avail itself of its weapons and so the devil triumphs the lord jesus suffers the grief and the shame this is the picture of the day now what is the

answer to it what did he say he said well this kind kind cometh out not but by prayer and fasting why our lord didn't pray and fast at this time it wasn't that he did he spoke and the devil departed out of him a child was cured from that hour our lord didn't fast our lord didn't pray was it that there was something in the power of this particular evil spirit that made it impossible for him to be cast out by the apostles i believe then prayer and fasting as being that preparation for the church to see its impotence and that sin and ignorance and unbelief that stands in its

way of being the vehicle that god wants it to be oh that if we could come today to realize that all around us on every hand are the multitudes held in a bondage similar to this as a little child and there are those that are looking to the church saying do something my heart aches when i see these men that have ministries on television ministries of healing and people going clear across the country many times to spend hundreds thousands of dollars then not to be able to get into the often after the days of time not to be able to get into the place for prayer i'll never forget down in st petersburg i met a man who came up after a mission service and he said to me i'm dr so-and-so from a very famous church in new england and he said we supported missionaries with your society i said yes

that's true i know some of them he said well uh i said doctor and interrupted him doctor why are you here on vacation he said no i said on business no and then for some reason i i felt insistent i said doctor why are you here he said i'm here because two years ago i started to have rheumatoid arthritis they said four years ago in the missionary convention i cashed in all my insurance doctor tells me that unless something is done i'll be have to give up my practice and i have no savings now everything has gone into the lord's work and here i have when he held out his hands he said rheumatoid arthritis i have no prospects of any professional income after two years i said doctor why are you here well he said so-and-so is here having a healing campaign and he said i've come down to heaven

pray for me and i turned away and went over to the pulpit and put my head down on my arm my heart was broken i knew his pastor a godly man and when i thought of him then and as i do now it seemed to me it was the father with his little child having to take him clear across the country because the church is fundamental he passed hundreds of them orthodox he passed hundreds up on the way down sincere he passed hundreds of them but when it came to the place where his hands that he'd used in his skill which had been used to support missionaries had been affected by rheumatoid arthritis and there wasn't the same medical skill that he knew of would do he had to turn somewhere and he couldn't turn to his pastor and he didn't come to us and he went all the way to saint petersburg from upper new

england and pictures to me the father with his son going past powerless church where is the fasting it's needed on our parts to search out our unbelief to search out our sin search out our uncleanness search out our disobedience and to see a transfigured lord that is today as he's ever been he's waiting but he can't bless him he can't bless unbelief he can't bless disobedience and so he said this time kind cometh out but by fasting and prayer every place in the test the old testament you find fasting it's always accompanied by repentance it's my people called by moses to come without but by prayer and fasting whose part our part what's the fasting for find out our impotence find out our weakness find out why god can't trust us find out why heaven closes why the heavens guide their call

for prayer and fasting on our part that we might be brought into that relationship where everything is under the blood everything is confessed every relationship is mended lives are clean and pure before the lord then then he said isn't that covenant that he made with his people centuries ago if my people which are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked way

then will i hear their prayer then will i forgive their sin then will i heal their land oh how much easier it is how we love to escape from the necessity of prayer and fasting how easy it is to say well it's not for this dispensation it's not for this period it's not for this hour and by that means then we can sit down smug in our estrangement from the lord and our alienation from

him and simply by a little intellectual trick escape from the responsibility of coming before the lord in brokenness and fasting and prayer and seeking out to know the things which grieve him whose name is holy oh how easy it is for us to take the pen knife of unbelief and cut it up and say well it's not for today but this doesn't change the fact that god is a prayer answering god when prayer isn't answered then the people whose prayers are not answered ought to fall on their faces and open their hearts melt and bleed and break fasting in the prayer is to bring them into that relationship with the lord and i believe that it was in those 10 days that they waited in the upper room that peter spoke and the others spoke i can hear james and john saying oh how god has shown me of my pride i

won't ask my mother to go to the lord and give me and john james the privilege of sitting on his right hand and his left when he came into his kingdom how arrogant how proud i was smug i believe those 10 days weren't just sitting there with a sort of blissful gazing at the ceiling no it was some business business they did with god with their own hearts in preparation and i believe that when the church is prepared to do business with god about its sin about its failure about its unbelief then that church that has no answer for the world that's bound in the chains of satanic darkness will be brought to the place where this transfigured christ can reveal himself again in the glory of his resurrection splendor and you have one of two answers one of two approaches one of two responses you

either can say well it's not for us and i'm all right or you can say no there's infinitely more that god has and i'm going to meet him i'm going to meet him i'm going to seek him part of the responsibility is mine i'm going to let god press my heart low before him as though all the responsibility rested on me this kind cometh out only but by prayer and by fasting let us pray our father on every hand their tragedies their heartbreaks there's been enough heartbreak this week to make angels in heaven cease their singing bow their heads before thee and sob and our god we live in a world it's filled with more tears than laughter and most of the laughter that one hears is a drunken laughter induced by narcotics we're not pessimist our father we just simply look out and see life as it is and our

hearts fail in us because we realize the church is so little answer and we see so many sent away with their little children just as though satan is bound that little lab so he's bound a generation of people that would come and find so little oh god break our hearts we hear him how long will i suffer you how long will i endure you might it be that somehow our hearts are melted within us and we're willing to take the responsibility as a personal responsibility and not look at somebody else and point at somebody else and say if they were lord that it be me all my responsibility and this can go through us until we can melt and weep and sob before the risen christ then lord this glorious position that he's given us and all these wonderful privileges afforded us the power of thy holy spirit

that he's bequeathed us shall be manifest in glory and honor and praise to the lord jesus and so we think of the position we have we think of the privilege the authority the ministry and then we see how powerless we are in the face of this generation's needs god come upon us with a great burden great longing great heartache a great hatred for sin a great abhorrence of everything that dreams thee thou whose name is holy baptize us with a with fasting and prayer for we know lord that fasting continues through the night but joy cometh in the morning we long to see the morning of the release of the splendor and glory of christ in

our midst come upon us oh thou god come upon us the people won't have to go halfway across the nation in vain hopes but they'll say they're the people of god and god

in the midst is mighty meet us meet us with our heads bowed and eyes closed this word of exhortation are you prepared to let take the responsibility for the whole church are you are you preserved prepared to say who is responsible well i assure you this that if you're saying somebody's responsible you're the one that's causing the difficulty but if you'll turn and say oh god the full responsibility is mine then god has begun to revive the church because you're part of it are you prepared to take the whole responsibility for the glory of christ and spreading forth of his praise the outstretching of his arm will you do it let us do it together each of us alone before the lord oh god it's all my fault it's all my fault and break and melt medium until god can pour forth his spirit upon us

this kind cometh out but by prayer and by fasting let us stand how you're going to do something about whatever impression god has made upon your heart today you'll never be quite the same you'll either walk in the light of the drawings that you sense and feel or light talk in shallow conversation and the frivolous will be like the birds that snatch the seed that's cast upon the ground and you determine it perhaps for some of you the best thing you could do would be to speak to no one and to go home and melt before god and not leave until everything between you and him is settled father of our lord jesus we're living in such desperate days living in such days of great need breathe upon us as a people thou does want us clean oh we know it's heartache it's grief to bend to break to bow but

thou does not want to keep us bent and broken and bowing thou does want to raise us up clean and filled and strengthened but make us willing to bow now that we may stand later and so come upon us lord and let whatever truth i would strive from this we've heard and considered today do its gracious work in the hours that remain go with us now as we part deal with each of us as we have need get glory to christ may grace mercy and peace from god the father son and holy spirit be and abide with each of us now and until we meet again amen

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