



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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June 19, 2011
1st Sunday after Pentecost
Sermon Text: [Matthew 28:16-20](#)
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Genesis 1:1-2:3](#)
Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 150](#)
Second Lesson: [2 Corinthians 13:11-14](#)
Gospel Lesson: [Matthew 28:16-20](#)

Christ's Authority is With Us

In the class yesterday, we were looking at Christ's return and talking about the signs of the ends of the age, the signs of the times. One of the things that Scripture says is that as the end gets closer and closer, things will become more and more ungodly. That's what is spelled out for us really clearly in Matthew 24. On a day like this, Father's Day, you think about how each generation of fathers faces new challenges, new difficulties that come because the days are becoming more and more ungodly.

I know that I face challenges that my dad never had to face. When I was growing up, with just me and my sister at home, I know my dad never faced certain challenges that I do. Dad never had to hear my sister and I saying, "Is that my (fill in the blank) that you're wearing?" I hear that all the time with my two girls. It seems like there's always an argument about "You're wearing my this" or "You're wearing my that." Did you ever have that experience? Why does that happen? I suppose it has something to do with possession. That's mine and unless I tell you that you can wear it, you really shouldn't be wearing it. When you are doing it, this is a great opportunity to fight about something.

Authority and possession, that's what Jesus really talks to us about today as he gives the Great Commission. He talks about his authority and he talks about his abiding presence. He knows one of the things we are going to want to fight with him about isn't clothes. It's about doing this Great Commission. We want to say "Here I am, Lord. Send that person over there to go and do this stuff you told me I'm supposed to do. I don't want to do it." So our Lord has to tell us that he has all authority. Therefore, because he has all authority, here's what he wants us to do, and he is going to be with us always as we do it. He's really trying to encourage us and comfort us and give us the strength that is not found in us to make disciples by baptizing, by going and by teaching.

So today we want to think about this authority that Jesus has and his presence. His authority is with us and continues to always be with us. Ponder for a minute about what his authority is and what that means when he says that to us. Then we hear his encouragement to proclaim it. Don't just sit on it. Proclaim it.

We are told that the Eleven, and I tend to believe that other followers of Jesus, those who had been devoted to him during his earthly ministry, went to Galilee like Jesus had told the Eleven to do. Then it says that Jesus came to that mountain. It appears from

other places in Scripture that they spent some time together here. It says that when they saw him, they worshiped, but some doubted. I don't necessarily think it means some of the Eleven because they had already seen Jesus at least three times before this, but if this is the reference that Paul was talking about in Corinthians when he said Jesus appeared to the 500 brothers at once and taught them and instructed them, it would make sense that some of those others who were there... they had heard the reports and now they saw it with their own eyes... they were shook up and didn't know what to think. I think that's understandable. That's why Jesus has to spend some time teaching them and instructing them and building them up with the Gospel message in the Word.

One of the things he tells them is that all authority has been given to him. Think about what that means, all authority. He has authority over everything. Everything belongs to him. Not only because he had created it, but because he had completed his work of buying back the world, the people from their sins, from death and from the power of the devil. So now all authority had been given to him. Think about how over the last three church seasons we've really looked at Jesus' authority. During Epiphany we saw how he taught with great power. We saw how he performed miracles in great power. You see his authority.

When he was doing the business of saving us, we call that his state of humiliation. He gave up the full and constant use of his divine power and glory. He didn't always use it. But at times he did, and we saw that during Epiphany. He changed water into wine. He walked on water. He raised the dead. He healed the sick. He cast out demons. It was the first case of deviled ham... remember, he sent them all into that herd of pigs that went over the cliff. He showed his power during the season of Epiphany.

Here is what is amazing about our God, about Jesus. During Lent we saw how he set aside that authority and that power, how he allowed himself to be betrayed, to be beaten, to be mocked, to be ridiculed, to be crucified so that he would take the guilt of our sins to the cross and die as the punishment for our sins. We see him set aside this authority because it benefits us. That's amazing love, isn't it?

During Easter we see him in his glorified state resurrected from the dead and appearing and walking through walls. We see him demonstrating his authority for 40 days to the apostles until he ascended.

Now when he speaks these words, "Because I have all this authority," and he's going to leave them shortly, he tells them "Here are your marching orders. This is the authority I have. I've demonstrated it. You've seen it. Therefore, because I have this authority, make disciples of all nations by going, by baptizing and by teaching them everything" is literally what he says.

We can consider and contemplate his authority, and there's no denying it. It's amazing that he uses his authority and power in love to buy back or to save filthy rotten sinners like you and like me, but that's what our God does. The same God that has the power

over nature, the power over life, the power over death, that has now defeated Satan and has complete and absolute power even over Satan, he says to us, "You guys go. This is my plan. I'm going back to heaven. You are now my voice. You are now my hands. You are my hands. You are my arms. You are my feet. You go and share this message so that people believe and so that people are strengthened in faith." That's what he tells us to do. He says, "Surely, I am with you always, to the very ends of the age."

This command he gives is between two slices of encouragement. God's power (his authority) and his presence. That's why then he tells us to go and do this. We have to remind ourselves of his power and his presence, otherwise we are going to find every excuse in the book why we don't have to do this, why it's someone else's job.

Go into all the world... we say, "I can't go into all the world. It's too big. I don't even get out of the state. How can God want me to go into all the world." Well go into your world then, right? Where does your world begin? Where do you open your eyes in the morning? Your world begins at home, right?

The people at home either don't know Christ or they need to be taught everything he has commanded. That's your job. That's what Christ has entrusted you with. Start where your world is. Start with where you live, your home. Start with your friends, your family, your relatives. Do you have any relatives who once stood in front of this altar and said "I'd rather die than fall away from Christ" and now seem to have tripped and fallen away? They've got other more important things to do than know Jesus Christ, their Savior, and walk with him? Then your job (that's your world) is to make disciples by going, by baptizing and by teaching.

The power of the Triune God has been poured out on you in your baptism. The presence of the Triune God is with you as you speak his Word faithfully. God said, "Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever listens to me listens to him who sent me." That's God's promise. That's his power. He's given it to you. He's poured it out on you. Now he wants you to use it. He doesn't give it to you just so you can make use of it when things are going bad and think "Now I guess I better turn to God." And when things are going good, "I guess I'll just turn to my mirror and see how great I am." That's not what God wants.

He's designed it so our entire life is devoted to serving him. That's our purpose... to know him, to grow in our knowledge of him and to go with him to others. That's what he has called us to do.

I'll tell you, there is a joy unlike any other when God uses you to share the Gospel with someone else. It's a humbling thing, but it is a joy that God blesses you with to know that person now has heard the Gospel and they'll be in heaven with you. That's a peace and a joy that passes all understanding. That's what the Gospel brings about in our lives. God gives us that privilege, that honor, that responsibility.

It's true. You and I often drop the ball. We don't carry out what God has given us. We make excuses. We don't do it. We don't want to talk about our Savior because we don't want to have people not be friends with us. I guess in our heart we're really saying, "I'd rather they go to hell than I talk to them about Jesus." I don't think we believe that, but sometimes don't we live it?

Here's the glory of Christ... he loves us and forgives for the times we've turned our backs on him. He doesn't use his power and his authority to punish us or to condemn us. He uses his power and authority that took away our sins to assure us that we are forgiven. When we understand the depth of our own sin, when we see what God has taken away from us, then we become like those early Christians who couldn't help but talk about what they had seen and heard, as Peter said, when he was once on trial. We can't help but talk about this. This is the most important thing in our lives.

Don't fight with God about his authority. It's his. But isn't it amazing that he's entrusted it to you to carry out the proclamation of the Gospel?