

Struggling With Authority Matthew 7:28-29

I. Why do they make such a big deal about authority?

- A. What do we mean when we say someone “speaks with authority”?
 - 1. We are saying that they speak strongly.
 - (a) They speak with strong convictions.
 - 2. So, are they saying that Jesus speaks like he really believes it?
 - (a) They contrast Jesus with their teachers of the Law.
 - (b) Are they saying that their teachers are kind of wimpy?
 - (c) That they have weak convictions and don’t speak strongly?
 - 3. There is something going on that we are missing.
- B. The Jews of Jesus’ time had an ordination process.
 - 1. A process through which they would authorize teachers.
 - (a) Podcast by David Daub: “Rabbis and Disciples”
 - 2. Two key terms
 - (a) Smikah: “a leaning upon”; an ordination.
 - (b) Reshut: authority
 - 3. A rabbi with reshut leans his hand upon another rabbi.
 - (a) He is ordaining a younger rabbi whom he has disciplined.
 - (b) Like Paul laying hands on Timothy; an ordination.
 - (c) You weren’t authorized without this smikah.
 - (d) This was quality control, protecting against false teaching.
 - 4. Rabbis with reshut could do three things:
 - (a) Pass legal judgments.
 - (b) Initiate new interpretations.
 - (c) Have disciples that follow them (itinerant).
 - 5. In Jesus, day, there were only 35-60 rabbis with reshut.
 - (a) A rabbi’s interpretation was called his yoke (Mt. 11:28-30).
Jesus is calling his followers to come under his teaching.
- C. So, Jesus is teaching like someone with reshut.
 - 1. The teachers of the Law in the synagogues are quoting others.
 - 2. Jesus is giving a new interpretation.
 - 3. The religious leaders questioned his reshut (Matthew 21:23).
 - (a) They are asking, “Who ordained you? Do you have reshut?”
 - 4. Jesus asks them about John’s baptism (Matthew 21:24-27).
 - (a) This is more than just a clever question.
 - (b) The rabbis questioned John’s reshut, too.
 - (c) Jesus called him a great prophet (authority from God).
 - 5. John performed Jesus’ smikah (ordination).
 - (a) When John baptized Jesus he was filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - (b) He was 30 years old, the typical age for a rabbi’s ordination.
 - (c) But John didn’t mentor Jesus. Who did? (Isaiah 50:4-8)
- D. The big theme in Matthew’s gospel: Jesus is King (has authority).
 - 1. It starts with Jesus’ genealogy, which includes King David.
 - 2. Herod tries to assassinate this coming King.
 - 3. Jesus’ authority is a big theme.

- (a) He has authority to forgive sin (proves it with a miracle).
- 4. Matthew concludes with the Great Commission, “All authority..”
 - (a) Matthew 28 and Acts 2 are the disciples’ smikah.
- 5. The reason for today’s verses: Matthew is pointing to a higher authority. Jesus’ authority comes from God, not men.
- 6. He is LORD!

II. As cultural Americans, we struggle with authority.

- A. Our culture puts a high value on individual independence.
 - 1. Not all cultures are like ours.
- B. But struggle with authority is also a human nature issue.
 - 1. Adam and Eve
 - (a) The temptation undermined trust in God as authority.
 - 2. Is God really good? Does he want good for me?
 - (a) Is it good for me to obey?
 - (b) Isn’t that the same thing we struggle with?
- C. Relational attachment and trust in authority.
 - 1. The bond of attachment enables one to trust.
 - (a) True in parent-child relationships.
 - (b) True in marriage.
 - (c) True in relationship with God (John 14:23-24)
 - 2. Brain science agrees with this.
 - (a) The left brain learns more when right brain feels attached.
 - 3. Spiritual growth requires attachment to God.
 - (a) Love motivates us to want to please God, honor God, etc.
 - (b) That’s why seeing the Gospel motivates us to grow.
 - (c) It reminds us that we are deeply loved!
 - (d) It reminds us that God is trustworthy!
 - (e) It strengthens our attachment to God.

III. We need to remember that our Lord is a gracious and benevolent King.

- A. Yes, he has authority over us, but that is not a threat to us.
 - 1. He is good and always wants good for us.
 - 2. Jackie Hill-Perry quote, Holier Than Thou.
 - 3. She’s got it right. God himself is the incentive for repentance.
 - 4. In other words, his goodness is what motivates yielding to his authority.
 - (a) God invites us to “Taste and see that the Lord is good!”
 - (b) When we have tasted, we yearn for more.
 - (c) Secondly, we desire to please the one whose love is so good!
 - (d) That’s why Jesus says, “If you love me you will obey...”
 - 5. We don’t need threats like Jackie Hill-Perry received.
 - (a) We need greater attachment.
 - (b) We need deeper experiences of his love.
 - 6. We need to experience the presence of God more fully!
 - (a) Bible study alone will not do it (left-brained discipleship).
 - (b) Neither do we want to neglect the Word.
 - 7. We need whole-brained discipleship (Word + experience)!

