

“Jesus Has the Authority”

Mark 5:21-43

We had a wonderful week of Vacation Bible School. Of course we had a Bible story each day. We spent most of the week in the Old Testament with David and the Judges and the three men in the fiery furnace. We also heard about blindness being healed – Bartimaeus and Paul were both healed of blindness (both physical and spiritual).

But during our time together we focused on three words in particular: Vocation, Authority, and what it means to be Awesome.

Jesus has many vocations. He is prophet, priest, and king – as we read in the letter to the Hebrews. He is our Creator in that He spoke all the universe into existence. He is the One who said, “Let there be light.” He is our Savior, our Redeemer, our Friend. “What a Friend we have in Jesus,” as the hymn writer says. In our Gospel reading, we see that Jesus is a Healer. He has many vocations.

So what is a vocation? It is not simply a job that brings you a paycheck. No one has just one vocation in life. A vocation is any role in life in which you have authority or responsibility. In addition to being a pastor, I am a husband, a father, a son, a brother, an uncle, a friend, a teacher. All of those roles, all of

those vocations give me authority in varying degrees and responsibilities in varying degrees.

God has given us these vocations in life for the good of our neighbor, not for the good of our self. The authority I have over my wife and children is to be for their benefit. My work as a father is to be for their ultimate good – not just putting a roof over their head and food on the table. I am to be the minister of the Word of God in my household. That is the role of every father (not just the ones who are pastors). You, as fathers, are the one whom God will hold accountable for teaching the Word of God to your children.

The children also have responsibilities. They are responsible for hearing that Word, for showing honor and respect to their parents and other authorities. This is what God desires for you. This is how God blesses you in this life.

God always works through means. He does not simply rain down grace from on high. He creates faith through Baptism. He doesn't speak directly to you. He speaks to you through Moses and the prophets, through the words of Jesus and the apostles. He doesn't show up when we gather for worship and say, "Here I am." Yet, He is right here at Our Redeemer every Saturday night and Sunday morning. He has told you, "This is My body . . . This is My blood." If you want to find Jesus, He has told you where He is.

Just like the spiritual blessings from God come through these means of grace, so also the day to day blessings of life do not simply rain down out of heaven. In your vocations of life, God has placed you under the authority of others that they may do good for you, just as God has placed others under your authority that you may do good for them.

If you want to see how richly God has blessed you, just look around – you are a baptized child of God in the safety of God’s House, hearing His Word of forgiveness and grace, participating in the sacramental life of Christ’s Church as the people of God have done for centuries, and you get to do this with people you love and people who love you.

This is what it means to live under the authority of God. Authority, when used properly, is always used for the good of those under that authority. Be thankful that you live under the authority of Christ.

In our Gospel reading today, we see the fullness of Christ’s authority. The authority of Jesus is recognized by the synagogue leader named Jairus. He says, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she” (here is where English translators drop the ball) . . . The translation says, “So that she may be made well.” It actually says, “So that she may be (swdzw) saved.” The same word shows up with the woman Jesus heals with the flow of blood. Jesus says to her,

“Daughter, your faith has (saved you) (not has made you well), go in peace.

Jesus has the authority to heal. But even more, He has the authority to save. However, it is only when Jesus gets back to Jairus’ house that we see His real authority. The girl has died. The family and friends and neighbors are mourning and wailing as is their custom. It is a good custom. Death hurts.

But Jesus has authority over death. As Jesus will say to His disciples in the Upper Room, “I have the authority to lay down My life, and I have the authority to take it up again.” This is why Jesus is awesome. That is a word which gets thrown around a lot these days. To be “awesome” is thought to be cool, or fun, or exciting. That is not what the word means.

To be awesome means to be totally terrifying and awe creating – to the point of overwhelming you. What is “awe”? Caleb the Camel described it as the feeling you get when you are standing at the very edge of a cliff and look down. When you are in awe of something, or someone, you recognize that you are small and powerless compared to them.

Being our God and Savior, Jesus is truly awesome. We stand in awe of Him, and we give thanks that we are under His authority, because He has the authority to forgive you all your sins; He has the authority to save; and like with Jairus’ daughter, He has the authority raise you up from the dead – and He will. Amen.