

Is the “Need” for Authority a Biblical Concept: Discussion Two

What Did the Apostles Think About Authority?

Review:

I. With our last sermon we took a short break from our studies in the “Sermon on the Mount” to begin a short study on current issues regarding Authority and the Bible:

- A. When we say Authority we are generally defining it as a need to find a Biblical precedent or approval for our actions
- B. But our studies in Matthew chapter five served as a good spring board for this discussion: If you recall from two weeks ago, the last subject that we saw Jesus dealing with was stating that He came to fulfill, not to destroy. Not only this, but He had the utmost respect for each and every one of God’s commands, and expected the same from others.
- C. And the first question that we wanted to discuss was whether or not this idea of needing Authority for what we do is even a concept that can be found in scripture.
- D. The first place that we looked was to see what Jesus thought about it: We mentioned some reasons for starting here last week, but in addition to those I thought what the Lord had to say regarding God’s commands was an especially good place to move into a discussion about these matters:

II. And what did we find?

- A. In the two passages that we looked at, in **John 12** and **Matthew 28**, we found that Jesus staked the importance of what He spoke solely on the grounds that He did some on the Authority of the Father:
 - 1. Not His miracles, not His example, not the quality of His teaching or any other reason:
 - 2. He was able to command others because He claimed to have authority, and He never claimed any other Authority than what the Father had given Him.
 - 3. And while the example that Jesus set for us should settle the matter of whether Authority for our actions is needed or not, we stated last week that the very same attitude of Jesus can be seen in the writings of the Apostles as well.

4. So the question that we want to ask this morning, is what did other New Testament writers think of Authority?

I. The Example of the Apostle Paul:

- a. While the same attitude can be found in other New Testament writings, I want for us to focus on Paul; specifically some of the instructions that he gave to Timothy.

i. Read: II Timothy 1:2-13

1. Before we discuss some of the specifics of this section I'd like to point out a couple of broad points:

- a. **First** the type of the words that we can notice appearing most often:

Kindle, Join, entrust, guard, retain... These related terms that pop up throughout this reading are calls to action: *The specifics of that action we will discuss in a moment*

- i. They are not confined to this section of the letter either; in the following chapters you see these same terms as well as *remind, solemnly charge, diligent, endure, be ready, be sober*:

- ii. These types of admonitions were nothing new to Timothy. One imagines that he heard these as he journeyed with Paul, and this was now his second letter that he had received. And while it is the second, in this regard the tone of the letter matches the first:

1. In I Timothy you see the same sort of call to action with words like:

a. Urge, entrust, fight, keep, constant, solemnly charge

- b. **The second** point then is how these repeated terms fit in to the overall context of these two letters. In each instance these terms are written to Timothy in the setting of continuing in the teachings and doctrine that he had learned from Paul. And perhaps more importantly, these calls to action we to strive to do this in the face of other men rising up and trying to teach things that were different from what Paul had taught.

- i. 1 Tim 1. Paul *Urged* Timothy to stay at Ephesus to instruct men not to teach strange doctrines

ii. 1 Tim 4, Paul says that in contrast to those who fall away by following different teachings, by continuing to follow the doctrine that he had been taught Timothy will be constantly nourished

iii. The same is true in all of II Timothy. All of the solemn charges, the urging, the entrusting, it all has to do with Timothy making sure that he was familiar with the teachings Paul had passed down to him so that he could guard it from any who wished to change it: **II Timothy 3:12-16**

b. **The Question** that we need to ask next is why did it matter? Why was it so important that Timothy continue to do and believe what Paul had entrusted to him?

i. Just as we did in our previous lesson, I want to briefly point out all of the factors that Paul did not try to use to give importance to what he taught:

1. The amount of time and energy that Timothy had already invested in it

2. The close father-son type relationship that Paul and Timothy had developed over their time together

3. Even though he mentions it twice as a matter of fact in this letter, Paul doesn't appeal on the basis that Timothy would be following the practice of his family

a. So why should Timothy stick so closely to what Paul had to say?

ii. One place to answer that question is in **Galatians 1:11-20** (Spoken in the context of defending his ministry)

1. Paul claimed that what He had to say was only important because of its source. It didn't come from Paul. It didn't come from any other man, even the other Apostles. Paul claimed the source of his teaching as coming from the Lord.

2. THAT is why it was important for Timothy to guard, to entrust, to be sober and ready!

iii. If we were to establish a chain of command so to speak, it would look something like this:

1. We only accept the teachings of the Apostles because they identify and could prove that Jesus was their source of authority

2. We only accept the teachings of Jesus because He identified and could prove that the Father was His source of authority

3. The Father has the Authority to give because He has created all things:

- iv. To answer our original question, establishing authority is not only a Biblical concept, it is a Biblical backbone. It is the reason given why we should listen or give credence to anything that scripture has to say.
1. How can I expect to break away from that? Who am I to think that I am somehow above Jesus and the Apostles in this regard-- that I don't need authority to act?
 2. What am I saying when I casually disregard the details about getting the pattern right, when there is so much Biblical emphasis on solemnly guarding them?
 - a. Paul answers that for me in I Timothy 6:3-4-- those who advocate words different from what came from Jesus are "conceited and understand (s) nothing"
- c. Well the question we need to answer next would be how one goes about establishing and applying that Authority.-- Those are the questions we will address in our following lessons.