

What is the Authority of Jesus?

Sermon Notes for Oct 1, 2017 at Brentwood

Ps 25:1-9 (492) & Matthew 21:23-32 (901)



**When he entered the temple,
the chief priests and the elders of the people
came to him as he was teaching and said,
“By what authority are you doing these things,
and who gave you this authority?”
(Matt 21:23)**

Provocative Ponderings that Call Forth Our Potential in Christ

- Let me cut straight to the point, to the heavy part of the sermon – the authority of Jesus is the authority of the power that made and still reforms and refines the glory/energy of the entire cosmos - it's a ridiculous, scandalous, foolish, blasphemous claim – yet, there it is – this Jesus is Lord of the cosmos – the determining power in all that is happening – like I said, this is heavy stuff – but it is also the stuff of abundant, flourishing life – nothing is more fundamental to our authentic being than our answer to this question, “Do you accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour?”
- I've been taking a course on Jesus out at Vancouver School of Theology with the New Testament professor there, Harry Maier – in class on Thurs, Harry outlined three perspectives on Jesus that have emerged over the past 500 years as the church has learned more about its Lord and what it means to follow him – from the Reformation in the 1400s and 1500s through to the middle of the 1900s, the focus was on how sinful humanity could stand before a just God – Jesus was the sacrifice that made that happen – following the Holocaust and other horrors of the Second World War, the focus was on how God becomes a God of all humanity – in Jesus, the covenant with Abraham to bless all families of the earth is re-emphasized – God gives himself to conquer sin and death as forces that alienate and separate all humans from the grace of the Trinity and from each other – but both of these perspectives can be seen as narrowly religious – the first simply between God and the sinner, the second simply between God and his people – the third focus that has been emerging over the past 20 years moves from the religious to the broader community and the cosmos – it sees the writings we have that point to Jesus in their social and political context – it sees Jesus as a disruptive protagonist in the religious, political, economic, and social environment of his day – to call Jesus Lord, to recognize his authority as the very presence of God in our midst, of God being here for all humanity, calling all humanity back home to work with him for the wellbeing of the cosmos, that is what the writings of the New Testament are all about – Jesus calls into question the ultimate authority of all those who denigrate and deny the dignity and worth of any of God's beloved human beings – all authority in the heavens and on earth belongs to this friend who washes our feet – accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour means emulating his suffering servant way of being in the world

Notes for a sermon preached by Brian Fraser,
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So, what are we going to do with this ...

This whole sermon has been pretty heavy – filled with stuff that we probably don't think about every day – fine points about who Jesus is and scholarly debates about how we should read the Bible – but there is something in here that is crucial to our faith – when the powers of our day and age come to us, either in the privacy of our own consciences or in the public influence we have by how we show up, who or what do we accept as lord of our lives? – what vision or model of authentic human being shapes our life and work? – can people see, and hear, and feel the Commonwealth of God at work in our lives, awkwardly, imperfectly, always, but still at work? – what I hope we will do with this sermon is ask that question more seriously more often