

Understanding Authority (Part 3)

by Paul Lloyd

Understanding authority is not just about obeying rules, but about having a relationship with God and seeking His will in all aspects of life.

Duration: 1:10:23

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 5:25, Acts 5:29, Philippians 2:14

Topics: "Authority"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the topic of understanding authority and dealing with difficulties in a Christ-like way. He emphasizes that we live in a fallen world and face various challenges due to our own fallen nature. The speaker highlights the importance of having good attitudes when making appeals to authority, as a bad attitude can hinder the success of the request. He uses the example of Daniel and his friends who made an appeal to not defile themselves with the king's food, and how their good attitudes led to God's favor and blessings upon them.

Transcript

Good morning. Are you meeting with the Lord today? You're hearing His voice? Can we just sing a song together? Why don't we stand together and sing one more? Let's make this our prayer. Eternal Father, number 105, I believe it is, talks about our, by faith, soaring to be with the Lord.

And then the realization that He's actually in me, in my breasts. So let's make that our prayer. Eternal Father, when to Thee, beyond all worlds, before the Blessed Majesty, I stand inside.

But Savior, Thou art by my side. Thy voice I hear, Thy face I see. Thou art my friend, my daily guide.

God over all, yet God with me. And Thou, great Spirit in my heart, dost make Thy temple may. The whole of God Thou art, yet dwelleth plain.

Blessed Trinity, in whom alone all things create and move or rest, I in the hands, Thou hast Thy throne, Thou hast Thy throne within my breasts. Thank you. Thank you, Father.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Holy Spirit. You are our treasure, the true treasure of our life, Lord, the lasting treasure.

All the things of this world will pass away, but You are eternal. And Your life in us is eternal life. And so, Lord, we just acknowledge that gift this morning with gratitude that You chose, Lord, to dwell in these clay bodies, Lord, these frail and weak temples.

Thank you, Lord, for that gift of Jesus. Lord, we want to protect that gift. We want to nurture that gift, Lord.

We want to honor that gift. We want to love that gift of Yourself. And we pray as we preach Your Word today and as we listen to Your Word, Lord, that that would be our heart's desire, welling up as thankfulness, gratitude, and love for Your great gift to us through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen. You may be seated. Welcome, everybody, here.

Welcome to all the visitors and regular attenders and whoever you are. Thank you for joining us. I'd like to do part three of the series that I was working on of understanding authority.

And as I said, I think the last time, the third message would be dealing with difficulties in a Christlike way is the title, the subtitle or whatever I'd like to give. Dealing with difficulties in a Christlike way. We live in a world that is fallen, in a world that is not perfect as it should be.

Is that true? Is everything the way you wish it was? It's not. We live in a world that's fallen. And because of that, and because of our own fallenness, our own flesh, there's difficulties that arise.

So if you weren't here, if you didn't hear the first two messages, it's sort of coming in at the end. Maybe I can, hopefully you can make some sense for you as well. You know, we talked about how really coming to know the Lord is basically coming under God's authority.

So before we know God, the Bible says we were in darkness and we were captive to the prince of darkness and in his kingdom. But when coming to Jesus, coming to salvation, becoming a Christian means I become under the Lord's authority. The Father is now my leader, my head.

And I am not my own boss anymore, but I have come under Jesus as my authority. And that's a beautiful thing. And many beautiful things happen when we do that.

You know, anything we look at in the Bible, the Bible has a lot of things that where God says, you know, you should do this. I want you to do that. But we could sum up all of those things basically by saying it's who Jesus is.

Am I right? All the commands of God, all that he gives us, they're basically descriptions in a sense of the life of Jesus Christ. And that's the will of God is that he would live through us. His life would be our life.

And so we talk, we come here on Sundays a lot. And a lot of times we talk about those things because that's what the scriptures speak to us about. But we never want to forget that fact when we're doing these things.

Christianity is not I'm doing all these right things and God tells me I need to do this and this and this. But it's a relationship with God. And it's that causes Jesus to live his life through us.

And as we look at this area of authority, I think that can be very helpful to realize that, you know, being a person who's under authority and God's authority is exactly who Jesus was and is. Isn't that right? We could go back to his early days as a child when he was 12. And it says that he was, you remember, he

stayed overnight there with the priests and talked to them and his parents came and got him.

And they said, and you know, he said, the Bible says that he came with them back to Nazareth and he was subject to them. Even though he was the son of God. He was a boy and he needed to be subject to his parents.

We could look at other areas of life. You know, when Jesus, Jesus was subject to even the Pharisees and the set and the scribes. Now, he had a lot of hard words for them, too.

But there in where is that there? Matthew 23, right before he gives his one of his great rebukes, he said. The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's seat. They're in that authority structure that God set up over the Jews.

He said, they sit in his seat. He said, therefore, all therefore whatsoever they did you observe that do. But then he said, but don't do what they do because they're a bunch of hypocrites.

So, you know, he was he understood authority. And he even though, you know, some people kind of play him as a rebel who came in and, you know, was with his whip and was throwing everybody out. And, you know, and no, he did those things as the son of God.

But he was also understood God's authority and encouraged the people hearing him to be under that. But just not to follow the hypocrisy of the leaders. Then then, you know, he said he was perfectly under the father's authority.

I came to do the will of him who sent me. That's in John chapter five. I seek not my own will, but the will of the father which sent me, which has sent me.

So Jesus's whole life was a life. Desiring to do nothing but do what the father who sent him did what had him do. So that's our life.

That's what our job is on this earth, isn't it? We are here today to do the will of the father. To continue in that life of Christ as he lived. Now, obviously, our life is different.

We're not the son of God in that sense. We're not going to die for sins and so forth. But to follow him in that.

So what does it mean to be under authority? You know, what is that? Somebody had given me a message from to listen to after I preached my first message or two on this series from Times Square Church. And it was kind of interesting to me. The pastor there, he started out and he said he was doing a series on authority as well.

It was kind of interesting. He had a three part series on authority. And he said to the people, he said, whether you're a person under authority or not, he said, that's not determined by what you do with the preacher when he preaches to you.

He said that that's shown by what you do with the usher when you walk into the building. Can I have an amen, Robert? But the point he was they must have some issues with seating there. I don't know.

But but but his point was, if you understand authority, you understand that an usher is somebody who's been appointed to do a job. And if he directs you to sit here, then go sit there. And someone who

understands authority doesn't have an issue with that.

Right. So I just thought that was amusing that, you know, it plays out in all those little ways as well as the big ones. It's just having an understanding.

This world is an authority. The kingdom of God is an authority system. And it's a beautiful thing when you realize that and you can rest in the authority of God.

And just live your life out flowing with his his purposes and his plans like that. All right. Can you can you be under God's authority if you are not under human authority? Well, you think that possible? It's not possible, is it? Because who told us to be under our human authority? Who told us to obey our governmental rulers? Who gave us that? God told us that.

Right. Who told children to obey your parents and the Lord? So so it's an interesting thing. But this thing of whether we're under God's authority is actually fleshed out and proven and and manifested oftentimes by how we react to the human authorities in our life.

Of course, it starts with God's word. Am I under the authority of his word? You know, if he says it, that settles it. You know, it's it's done.

The Lord said it. But then I think a lot of us, if it came to obeying the Lord, I hope nobody here would would dispute that. Right.

We all agree. If God says it, that's it. You know, I'm a Christian, a follower of God.

But when it comes down to these people around, you know, these these code officials who have all these dumb rules, you know, and these township township committees, you know, who don't who have to you have to get these crazy permits and, you know, you can't you can't burn stuff in your backyard, your own backyard. And, you know, that really that's where the rubber meets the road, isn't it? And the man of faith is able to see beyond these human authorities, these people that are around me and to see, OK, God, I'm under your authority and I want to rightly relate to all these other people as a testimony to you. And, you know, why would why did God command us to submit to imperfect human authority? I mean, think about that.

When God gave all those commands, he knew full well that we're all sinners. He knew that I am a sinner, that, you know, I have my eleven children and he's asking them to obey me. He knew I'm a sinner.

He knew I'm not going to do everything right. There's going to be mistakes that I make. And God knew that.

And yet he said, obey them. And I believe that that's all a part of God's test in life. You know, he's getting people ready for a kingdom that's coming where everything is done perfectly according to the will of the king.

And we're in that kingdom now. But that kingdom is coming where that's going to be fully manifested. Right.

I read in the Bible of a time when there is no more rebellion. There is no more uprising. There's no more self-will asserting itself where everything is done according to the will of God.

And I'm looking forward to that. And the more I read the news, the more I look forward to that, because it's not that way today. And so he's getting a people.

He's looking for a people. He's purging and preparing a people that are going to fit in that kingdom because they understand that authority and they've yielded fully to his authority. And so how we react to human authority really plays into all that.

So much. It's a humbling thing to submit myself to somebody who's imperfect and who makes mistakes. That's very humbling.

But it's also very good for us. And so this message, though, here today is, you know, what do you do when you feel authority in your life is wrong or is wanting you to do something that you struggle with? Kind of the difficulties of it. How do we deal with that? And last time, you know, we looked at the things that God, the realm where God wants us to work out.

And we talked. I wrote up on the board. You might remember I wrote up that there's some things that God forbids.

And then there's other things that God commands. And then kind of in the middle, there's this this pretty large realm of area where God doesn't neither forbids nor commands. He doesn't say he doesn't spell it out.

Let's put it that way. Things like in a home. He doesn't say that parents should put their children to bed by nine o'clock.

That's not in the Bible, is it? But he gives parents the right to choose that. Some parents, they go to bed nine o'clock and some parents go to bed at midnight or whatever they didn't do in their home. I don't know what your home does.

But, you know, that's a realm that God gave responsibility and authority to parents to figure out. And for children, he says, you know, you submit yourself to your parents, even though they may not do it the way so-and-so does. And you may like so-and-so's deal better.

So there's this whole realm of things that aren't particularly spelled out. And in a way, that almost makes it harder because, you know, if it was if we were to obey the things that God commanded, that's one thing. But to take a human authority who's imperfect and then to submit myself to their will.

Right. My will as a father is I want to be in bed by nine. That's my will, I believe, you know.

So my children get to do that. And that's that's part of the test, I think. But what do we do when when things aren't we feel that things aren't the way they should be? And the key thing I want to bring out today is this important matter of honor.

You know, we said it, and I think in the last message that there are times when we may not obey or cannot obey, but there's never a time that we are not to honor. And I think if we have that deep in our heart, that goes a long way towards helping us actually work through all that other stuff. So what do we do this week in family devotions? We were looking at Philippians chapter two and verse 14.

It says, do all things without murmuring and disputing, without complaining or arguing. That's right after it talks about Jesus, how he humbled himself, submitted himself to the death and the cross. And he was

exalted then to the highest place.

And it says, now you do all things without murmuring or disputing. And this following word here was jumped out this week. It said that you may be the sons, blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke.

And what stood out to me was the fact that what makes the murmuring and complaining is when we lose sight of the fact that we're a son of God, we have a heavenly father. See, if I have a father in heaven who rules over all, do I need to complain and murmur? My neighbors, both of them, one on either side, they love to complain about the highway and the roads. You know, I just don't want to get into all that, you know, like the snow plows don't do this.

They knock my mailbox over, they blow the snow in the wrong place. You know, it's just like this big thing that just, and I don't, that doesn't resonate with me. Because see, I've got a father in heaven.

And if he allows that to happen, you know, that's not the ruining of my life. And I've been to Ghana too. So I'm happy for the roads that we have.

Anyway, but you see, so much of the strife on this earth comes from people forgetting that they have a father in heaven. I was looking at the news the other week about all the things that happened down in Virginia, you know, where these groups were against each other, the white supremacists and then the, I don't know what you call the other group, but the anti-white supremacists. And I watched some of this interaction between these two sides and I watched the anger and the bitterness and things.

And it just struck me in such a powerful way. They must not have a father in heaven. They must not have a father.

Why are they fighting? Why are they feeling like they must do this? Why are they all, you know, full of fear, really? You see, the one side's afraid that these white supremacists are going to, you know, I guess, have their sway and, you know, hurt them and vice versa. The white supremacists, I particularly saw this one white supremacist fellow who had all these guns and, you know, he was all armed and ready to go. And I saw fear written all over his life.

He was afraid he was losing his identity as a powerful white man who, you know, ruled over the others. And that's what hit me. It struck me they must not have a heavenly father.

You see, when we have a father in heaven who rules over all, we can commit our soul to him. We can pray to him. We can ask him to change that which is unjust.

Me, getting in a fight and an argument with somebody is not going to change anything. So what do we do? You know, that's my first point. I'm going to give you five points here of things that we do when we reach a tough spot in a relationship with an authority in our life.

I'm going to give you five things. Then I want to give, I want to answer about three or four questions, hard questions some of you gave me. Questions to look at.

And then finally, I want to end up with a story that kind of illustrates some things about this. So right now we're going to do the five points. Point number one is what do you do when there's an issue with an authority in your life and you feel this isn't the way it should be for whatever reason? All right.

There it is. Pray. That's a good thing to say, isn't it? I mean, you always ought to throw one of those into any kind of instruction you're giving to people, right? But that's not what I'm, that's not the prayer I'm talking about here today.

Not the, oh yeah, we always should start out with prayer. So let's, you know, let's have a little 30 second prayer. Yes, Lord, this is a problem in my life.

Please straighten it out and help me in Jesus name. Amen. That's not what I'm talking about.

I am talking about your relationship with God. Do you have a heavenly father? And so getting the word of the Lord for your life. I can't overemphasize this enough.

You need to hear God's voice. See, my job as a pastor, as I see it, is like I can't change your life at all. Much as I'd love to.

I wish I could. Right. I can't do it.

But what I can do is lead you to Jesus who can change anybody's life. That's what I'm trying to do here this morning, really, is encourage us to come to him. And the way we do that is we pray again, not just one of those little rope prayers, but prayer where you know that you've heard the Lord's voice.

See, because the next four points that I'm going to give, they don't really, if you don't know that God wants you to do them, don't do them. Basically, let me say it that way. You need to hear God's voice.

And there is a relationship available to us where we can know in our heart with assurance. This is what God wants for me to do. You believe that? I mean, that is God's will.

He does not want his children just flailing their arms. Right. And getting worked up and trying to do this or that or make this happen.

He wants his children to have that calm awareness like Jesus did that I'm doing the will of my father and I'm taking that next step. And that's what this is. And so it's a prayer.

That's a relationship with the Lord to connecting with God to hear what he wants us to do. I can't I can't overemphasize that enough. Fathers, we need to have a word from God.

We can't just lead our family with good ideas and carnal methods. We need to know what God wants us to do. And if that doesn't if that doesn't make sense to you this morning, if that's like, well, I don't know how to do that or that, I encourage you to find out what that means.

Because until you do, you're not really properly connected. You're not connected with the Lord like you should be. So the first thing is hearing the voice of God.

Maybe that's a better way to say it than pray. Now, what's the second thing? The second thing that God may lead you to do is make an appeal. Actually, prayer is an appeal to, isn't it? That's our first appeal.

Now, making an appeal to earthly authorities. Let's look at Daniel chapter one. It's kind of a classic example of this principle.

We know the story. I think most of us here. These guys were captured, taken.

They were, I guess you wouldn't say they're refugees, but they were captives taken to a foreign land with a heathen king who did things not the way the Lord said to do it. He wanted him to eat his meat and drink his wine and do it all like that. But these three young men were young guys with an excellent spirit and they knew the Lord and they purposed to follow God, even though they were in such a place.

And let's read what happened here. And starting in verse eight, it says, But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank. Therefore, he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

He made an appeal. The king's face is worse liking than the children which are of your sort. Then shall you make me endanger my head to the king? Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

Prove your servants. I beseech you 10 days and let them give us pulse to eat and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before you in the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat.

And as you see, deal with your servants. So he consented to them in this matter and proved them 10 days. At the end of 10 days, their countenances appeared fair and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

Thus, Melzar took away the portion of their meat and the wine that they should drink and gave them pulse. And I like the next verse. As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill and all learning and wisdom.

And Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. So they made an appeal. And this is something that I think most Christians really don't understand how to do properly, what to do.

So I want to look at that. What does an appeal need in order to be a successful appeal? First thing I have is that there needs to be good attitudes in the person that is making the appeal. If the person making an appeal has a bad attitude, do you think that authority is going to want to grant them their request? That shuts the door right there.

Right. And, you know, we see here that it says God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. I believe that wouldn't have happened if he had a bad attitude.

Right. No way he had a good attitude. And so that's something when we're making an appeal to our parents, to our boss, to our whoever township supervisor about something.

We need to check our motive and our attitude. I mean, do I have an honoring attitude toward this person? That goes a long way right there. Number two, do we have good motives? Is our motive just simply a selfish motive? Because I don't like this thing.

And so I'm going to I want to get it my way. Or is it a motive that says, you know what, I again, I want to honor this authority and I want to make them successful. You know, that's what Daniel did.

Right. He found out that this fellow was concerned about losing his head and he found out that he was entrusted with the presenting of these young men to the king in a way that he would be seen as being a good steward, you know, a good caregiver. And so Daniel understood that.

And when he made his appeal, he he let him know that he recognized that he gave him this wise test to to prove that. Number three is learn what their desires are and why they gave the direction. One of the things that can really shoot down an appeal right away is if the person making the appeal doesn't really understand why I did it.

And they're suggesting something that displays that they really don't get it. This is why I didn't want to do that. And so therefore, that appeal isn't is not reaching me in a way that I can support that.

So it helps to find out what are their desires. And that's kind of what Daniel did here. In a sense, I mean, the man shared it with him.

You know, I'm watching over you. You're my friend, Daniel. I really like you.

But you got to understand, I'm going to be dead if you don't look good. So Daniel understood now, OK, that's the issue. And Daniel, God gave Daniel a little test.

He said, look, test us for 10 days. At the end of that time, you judge for yourself. And if we look OK and even better than it's a deal.

Right. And so he did that and it worked and God blessed. So learn what their desires are and why they gave the direction.

Make your appeal. Then make your appeal. Choosing your words carefully because you usually get like one chance for an appeal.

Two and three appeals. That's that's called nagging. Right.

But you get one shot. You can make your appeal. And so choose your words carefully.

I my wife made an appeal to me this morning about something. And I had said earlier that, you know, I don't want to do it that way. We'll do it this way today.

And her appeal, her appeal was wise. She saw that maybe there's something I didn't think through. And so that's the way she came.

She said, you know, remember the last time that this situation came up and how we wish we, you know, we didn't do it that way. And I mean, she was humble about it, but, you know, we wouldn't want that to happen again. I just thought I'd, you know, share that information with you.

Well, I thought to thinking about that and I was like, yeah, you know what? All right. Maybe that is better. Well, all right, we'll change it.

We'll do it that way. So that was a wise appeal. Careful words.

But see, an appeal, it usually needs to bring in the best way for an appeal to work is when you're bringing in something that your authority isn't aware of. That's sometimes that happens. There's some factor that they haven't thought through or thought about.

And by you sharing that, you may you may things might change that way. And this problem, this issue, this difficulty that you feel God might use you to change that thing and to work it out. So that's the appeal.

The appeal one number two. But let me say let me end up with the fifth point. If your appeal is rejected, you have to be prepared to have a good attitude.

I had an illustration of this just two weeks ago when I went to Ghana. He was a young man from Ghana. One of the young men from the set team, not from this congregation, but one of the young men, he shared his testimony.

And he said, my dad wanted me to go to college instead of going to set. Now, what would you tell the young man to do? I would consider this young man to be more spiritual than his dad. From the knowledge, the little knowledge I have, that would be my personal assessment.

So what would you counsel the young man to do? Many people would say, hey, look, you know, you're wanting to do the spiritual thing and go to set too. You need you need to go. Your dad is not in tune with the Lord.

And just, you know, it's better to obey God than man. Right. A lot of people would say that.

But that doesn't apply here, does it? This young man, he said he said he made his appeal to his dad. He said, Dad, you know, I really feel like this would be the Lord's will. You know, could I do this, please? You know, and his dad said, no, son, he said, I think you should go to college.

You know, I think that's going to be better for your future, for your life. So that young man, he did number five. He had he humbled his heart.

He had a good attitude. He said, Dad, if that's if that's what you really feel, he said, Dad, I'll plan that way. And he actually it wasn't just a fake thing.

He really, see, he saw he saw the one above. Now, you know, he got something changed, right, because he's on sent to his dad. When he saw his son humble himself and submit to that, that authority.

All of a sudden, God started working in his life. And it was only a matter of days where his dad called him over and he said, son, you know, I've been thinking about this whole thing, you know, sent to college. He said, you know, I really think he probably should go to sent to.

You see, that's an illustration of that point five. You don't know that your good attitude might just be the whole tipping point in that appeal. Because a lot of times, especially with parents, right, when our children don't have a good attitude towards us, there's a there's a resistance that we want to put up and they're putting up.

But when that breaks down, it's all it's almost like God can start working then. And that's exactly what happened in that situation. He's over in Ghana today doing the will of the Lord with his father's blessing, not because he just said, I'm going.

I got to obey God rather than man, but because his dad, he humbled himself before God and before his dad. And he got the blessing of the Lord to go to the Lord's will. I love testimonies like that.

All right. Number three, what do you do when you get into difficulties? All right. Leave sometimes again.

This this first one is key here. What does God want me to do? There are times when God wants you to leave. You know, they passed a burn ordinance in our township a year ago or something.

You can't burn stuff. Well, I don't burn a lot of things, but I'd like to burn a few things. Right.

Have a little nice fire in the back with the family or something. But my township said I can't do that. I don't as far as I know.

Yeah. What's the name of your township? Well, I might just do that. See, God doesn't want me to stay there, you know, and erect, you know, tents over my fire and keep it secret or, you know, or just blatantly do what I want to do anyway and challenge.

No, if it's fires is so important to me. Well, I can move to what was the name of that one? West West Earl out of East Lampeter and into West Earl. You know, sometimes that that is an honoring and a godly thing to do.

That's kind of a silly example, I think. But what does the Lord want me to do? There are times when I should leave. Now, you know, you can't leave your parents.

That's not a leave thing. But there are some issues where, you know, situations that you can leave. What about your job? You know, if you have a boss that's just really unreasonable and demanding and your life feels miserable.

Well, number one, ask the Lord. Sometimes God wants you to be right there every day facing that thing. And other times the Lord says, you know what? You can go.

You can go, son. Go find a job. I release you to get a job where you can where you can enjoy it.

But remember what I said? This determines all the other steps that you're going to take. Don't just leave something that God puts you in because guess what's going to happen the next time? If you don't graduate, you're going to get the test again. He'll bring you right back.

And no matter where you go, just ask Jonah. Right. So sometimes you can leave.

If it's a you know. Yeah. Sometimes you can't leave.

And so you're kind of stuck. And so number four. Now, you're not going to like this one.

Die. Sometimes when you do this, God's going to tell you, I want you to die. I want you to die to your own way, your own thoughts, your own plans, your own likes and dislikes.

I want you to be like my son, Jesus. Isn't that what he did? He was under the authority. He was in a place of authority with the Jewish leaders, the Roman leaders, and both of them were ready to put him to death.

Now, Jesus could have called ten thousand angels. Right. But he knew the father said, I want you to die.

And so he submitted himself to those earthly rulers, to those religious rulers and those earthly rulers. And he went to the cross. And of course, we're not going to we don't compare ourselves to that, you know, in any way.

But but the point is, it's still a principle that God wants for us. Sometimes you die. I want you to learn to die and it will bring a beautiful fruit in your life.

You know, it says in in first Peter, chapter four, wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him as unto a faithful creator. There's times when God leads us to death. And you know what? If you've done this and God and you know, God told you to do this.

It's not as bad. It's not so bad. There's a glory in it.

There's a sense of rightness that makes it all, you know, that helps to take that the pain of death away. So if God tells you to do that, he'll give you grace for that. And then the last one, number five, is disobey and and bear the consequences.

Now, this one is not for this is not for one that you can leave. OK, you get what I'm saying? He would rather have you leave something than disobey. But when when Peter and John were preaching the gospel, they had they had no choice.

It was either we obey the rulers and stop preaching or we obey Jesus and preach. And their response, we all know it. It's better to obey God than man.

There's times where we need to actually disobey. And, you know, those days are probably rapidly approaching for our nation here. We're in a civil where civil disobedience is going to be something we have to do because we have no other choice unless we choose to leave.

Unless God, excuse me, unless God leads us to leave America, right, go to New Zealand or somewhere different. But then we may have to take that last step with honor. John and then they didn't taught the officials, they honored them.

And again, that honor thing, I can't I can't emphasize that enough. So those are those are five things that I could give you. Maybe you can think of another option.

I couldn't think of any more. But what do you do when you're in this tough spot? Of all of these, I'd say number one is the most important that we have to do. God, what does God want me to do right now with this difficulty I'm facing? All right.

Well, I want to get to some of the questions then that that you all I asked people to hand in their questions and so forth. And I had a few give me some questions. Like we said, life is messy.

Things are not the way they should be. And that's where it really gets can be challenging. How do I work this out practically? How do I live like Jesus in my situation? Here's one.

What do you do when your authority rejects other authority and draws his subjects into isolation? Now that that sounds like a cult leader to me. Isn't that what they do? They don't. They have no other authority that they're under and they want to draw everybody away into.

So I'm not sure the exact situation that was meant by that. If that's a spiritual leader like church leader, you ought to run away from that as fast as you can. Because that's the way cults operate.

Right. Don't listen to anybody else. And I don't listen to anybody else either.

But follow me. See, that person is not under God's authority at all. And so that is an easy one.

If that's like a pastor or something, my answer is easy there. But, you know, what if that's what if that's your dad or somebody that you can't just leave? What if that's your husband or and that's where it gets a little trickier? And I don't know that we can give we can't really answer every possibility here today. One question to ask is, are they is this person breaking the law of, you know, the laws of God and man? If so, you know, that's an issue that needs to be dealt with.

It's not a let me say it this way. It's not a loving or proper or godly thing to say, I'm going to let's just take an extreme example. I'm going to allow my father to abuse my sister because I want to be someone who's under authority and I want to, you know, honor my dad.

That's that's wrong. That dad is sinning. He's not under God's authority and he has broken the laws of man.

And you are not bound to somehow be silent and think that that's honoring that person and pleasing to God. OK, so that that's a that's a hard one there. But some people have felt that they had to do that.

And we have this problem in our society today where where men are doing evil. And people are not people are afraid to report it or to expose. So that's a tough one there.

Here's one I got. I got a phone call from a fellow from way out west. He list I guess he listens to the messages sometimes and he called me after this message.

Second message, I think. Anyway, he called me and he said, hey, so I listened to your message and I have a question for you. What should I do? So here's my situation.

He said, I'm in this western state, he said, and where I live, he said, there are no Anabaptist churches around me. There's none. And he said, you know, I feel like this is where I'm supposed to be right now, but I have no fellowship with that.

He said, my church, I'm going to a Baptist church. He said, my pastor doesn't believe in the head covering. And he doesn't believe in non-resistance.

People are encouraged to go to join the army and things. And sometimes women teach men in the Sunday school. He said, how what what is your advice to me? So so here we have a kind of a messy situation.

Well, I knew that he he didn't have children. First of all, his children are grown and they're not in the home. That that has a big difference in how I would answer that man.

Because if he had a family of children and he's wanting to teach them in these principles of the Lord, I don't know that I could give him the advice that I gave him, which was basically what I said was, I said, you know, number one thing, if I have someone in my congregation, I want to sense that they are honoring to what I'm teaching and what I'm preaching, at least in the sense that they're not trying to make disciples to their beliefs and so forth. And so I said, I'm assuming that you feel like this is where God wants you, that there's there's enough of a work of God here. This pastor is a man of God, even though he may be teaching some of those things that are not, as we understand it, not right, but that you can recognize that he's a man of God.

And I said, I encourage you to go talk to him. I said, why don't you go talk to him and explain where you're at and ask him, is there room for me in your church? And what what is the parameters that you want me to be in in this church? You know, I believe in the pad covering. I believe in non-resistance.

I believe women shouldn't teach. What can I operate in this church? You know, am I OK to be here? The pastor says, yeah, you know, you can be and be here. You can.

You're welcome here. But maybe he'll say, but I don't want you talking about that to the people. Can you accept that? Or is this important enough to you? That's not going to work.

So it was sort of an interesting question to me, because it's like the opposite of maybe what I would normally deal with. How do you deal with this being in this setting? But it's the same answer. I put myself in that pastor's shoes.

I'm leading this church as I feel the Lord wants me to. And, you know, I have room in my church for people who don't see everything the same way I do. You know, it's OK.

We are different. And especially if that person is up front about it, and they're honoring in their attitude, you know, basically saying, I appreciate this and this about the church. And, you know, can I be here? Is this OK? I would have room for that.

But, of course, I would draw a line there. This is finally not what we believe about this and this. And we're not comfortable with you teaching that here.

And if that brother was OK with that, then that can be a relationship of honor there that can work. So that was how I answered him. I'm not sure.

I haven't heard back from him yet how it went. But that's that one. Here's kind of a big one.

This is one I've heard a lot. What if my parents think something's OK that the church leaders have said they don't want in the church? Anybody hear that one? Or maybe another way to say it is. What if a parent commands something that the church forbids? Or what if.

Or who has the authority in the home is another way to say it. Does the father or does the church? That's one that I think there's some fuzzy thinking on. I don't like that question.

Who has the authority in the home, the father of the church? Because I think it's the wrong question. We all know the answer to who has authority in the home, right? The dad does, right? Amen. The mother, the father.

But here's the issue. It should never be either or. It shouldn't be.

Dad believes this way, but the church leaders believe this way. So now I'm stuck. What do I do? Do I obey my dad or do I obey the church? That's an awful place for someone to be in.

And so that very question is the wrong question. The answer is why? Why is dad bringing his family somewhere where he can't wholeheartedly support and say, you know, these are men of God. They're teaching the truth.

We're going to follow as they follow Christ. And let's do it. The other is a broken is a broken relationship where it's a dysfunctional relationship.

OK, my children have never have never known that. They've grown up with with the what I've taught them is that we our leaders are godly. Our leaders are men of God, not perfect, but they're teaching us the truth.

And, you know, we're going to follow and we're going to honor the the wishes as best as we can. I believe that's a healthy, healthy situation there. But when we have a situation where we where our children now have to deal with.

Mom and dad don't really agree with the pastor on this one. And so I have to sort of decide now. I would say there's two different scenarios.

One scenario is where your parents are indifferent. And in a sense, they say, you know, we don't really see it that way. But but you decide.

Another more stronger scenario is where the parents say, I forbid you to do that. Then obviously you don't have a choice. Follow your parents.

But where the parents say, you know, I just don't see it that way. Then you as a as a child have an opportunity and a choice to say, you know, am I going to honor my church or am I going to. You know, dishonor.

So I believe, you know, I just have to say I'm going to say this kind of strong, but I believe that's sinful to make our children make that choice. That's sinning against them. Where they have to choose between mom and dad or my church.

Putting them in a lose, lose scenario. I kind of prayed over that thought about is that is that too strong a word or is that I don't think it is. I think it's sinning against our children if we put them in that place, just as it would be in a divorce situation where they have to choose.

Do I obey mom or do I obey dad? That's that's a very difficult thing that nobody should have. So, yes, dad has absolutely has the final authority in his home. And dad, if he if he's going to have any authority, is going to have to model to his family what it means to be under authority.

See, if dad is not demonstrating that being under authority, he won't have any authority in his home. It's all undermined. So that's a hard situation there.

What if this is the last one here? What if my parents aren't safe? Do I still need to be under their authority? We could maybe say, what if my husband isn't safe? You know, the Bible says the very thing that might lead them to the Lord. Is your submission submitting to them? Isn't that what it says in Peter that in first Peter chapter three, I believe, first Peter three. Likewise, you wives be in subjection to your own husbands that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the of the wives.

It may be child, son or daughter or wife. That may be the very thing that leads your unsaved parent or parent or husband to the Lord. Demonstrating that Christlike spirit of submission where you have a heavenly father watching out and you can put yourself under somebody who's a sinner and who's probably done wrong things to you.

So I'd encouraged that. I think the Bible encourages that there may be extreme. There are extreme cases where, you know, the Bible does allow for things, you know, when something's extreme, especially if there's abusive situation or whatever.

And so I believe and I just want to close with this with the story, true story. I believe that we are living in times and there's great deception. Do you believe that? I'm amazed at the the rapid growth of the the homosexual acceptance in our nation.

It's to me, it's almost unreal. In fact, it's it's obviously something spiritual. It's more than just, you know, something earthly.

It's something spiritual happening. There's a lying spirit loosed upon the world and especially in our in our country as we're a leader in the world that is causing people to throw out God's word in the name of love. It's very deceptive.

Well, we love these people and you hate them. Why do you why do you Christians hate all these people? I don't hate anybody. But see, that's the box we're being put in.

So there's this great deception. I believe one of the greatest safeguards that you and I are going to have is this whole thing. First of all, being under God's authority and then under the authorities around us.

And you know, the way people get deceived is when they get out from under that. And now they don't have that speaking into my life from my parents or from my church or from, you know, other authorities, my brothers in Christ. Satan knows that if he can get people outside of that realm, he can deceive them.

He can fool them. And the story that I wanted to share was a story that I read recently. Maybe I'll tell you the end of the story.

This man was a missionary in Africa in 1950. In the last year or two, I forget which, probably a year ago. He lives in Lancaster now.

He's 94 years old, I think. Lancaster Conference Mennonite. He married his gay son a year ago.

This man, serving God all these years, a missionary. He married his gay son in Lancaster City. The Lancaster Conference even took his credentials away after that one.

But he felt he was doing the righteous thing. He even wrote a paper about it to persuade that this is the righteous thing to do. Now, my question that goes through my mind is, how could someone get to that point? How did he end up there? What happened to this man? I mean, he's a young guy serving the Lord in Africa as a missionary.

So I did some research and looked into the background and so forth. Back in 1955, the group of missionaries from Lancaster Conference that were in this country, they felt strongly that these people should wear a tie, necktie. Because in this country, I guess the culture was big on that.

They felt very strongly that we should allow these people and promote that they wear neckties. Now, back in the 50s, the Lancaster Conference, that was not accepted. They all had to wear the plain coat, especially the ministers.

So personally, I'm not a big fan of the plain coat or I don't have one. I'm not against it, but it's not something to me. But what happened was, and there was a story written about this meeting.

It was written by somebody who thought it was a positive thing. So that was interesting to me. They were presenting this in a positive light.

These missionaries, I think there were four of them, and they met the Lancaster Conference officials at the airport. They were coming to have a meeting with the missionaries, and they all showed up with suit and ties on, the missionaries. And the Lancaster Conference officials, of course, this was a shock to them.

They had no clue that they would be there like that. And the leader of this group was this 94-year-old man that I'm telling you about. He was the leader of that group.

And he felt like, we're standing up for the right and we need to show them that this is what needs to happen here. It says that those officials, they went back to their hotel room and they wept. They wept.

They were just so grieved that, where's the honor? Where's the... Why didn't they dialogue with us? Why didn't they work about it? They went back and they wept. And again, the person who wrote this article was for the missionaries who did this. That's not the way to make an appeal.

That's rebellion. I think they might have been right. Maybe.

I don't know. Again, I don't think the plain code is the thing that has to be warned. I don't understand all the details.

But the point is, you could be right and be all wrong. If you're not honoring. If you're not making an appeal.

So he was the leader of that. And then I did more research. He was also the leader in other things.

He was the leader in getting women to preach in the Lancaster Conference. He was a leader in, I forget, several other issues that we would not agree with. And it just struck me, you know.

How did somebody get from being a missionary, sold out to the Lord, serving God like that. And end up finally at a place where he's rejected God's word. I say there's a seed there of rebellion.

That lived its life. It lived itself out through his life. And I'm saying this kind of a heavy story, sad story.

But I believe it's a warning story that we need to think about. You know, there's a way to disagree. There's a way to appeal.

There's a way to work through difficulties with church authorities, parents, your boss at work. And if you do it God's way, there's going to be a blessing. Things are going to turn out well.

And you might even be an instrument to bring about positive change. You know, towards more godliness. But there's also a way to do those things that doesn't work.

And that actually brings deception. So I pray and hope that we can all learn from these things. And that we all could be examples of Jesus.

In this world that we live in. Of a people that have a heavenly father. Who don't have to force in your face, force my way upon you.

Whether it's an official in the government. Whether it's a wife, whether it's a child, whether it's a neighbor. That's a godly testimony God wants to ring out.

We live in a world where everybody's rising up. Everybody's fighting for their rights and demanding. Jesus wants to be a remnant of people that demonstrate we have a heavenly father.

And we can trust him. And when we do, we will not be the sad people who lost out. But we will be the people that succeeded.

So God bless each one. I re-read the book, Let Me Die in Ireland, a year or two ago. And was so blessed with Patrick.

His testimony at the end of his life. Patrick was a man who had the burden of the Lord to go to Ireland. To return to Ireland.

He had been taken there as a slave and escaped. And then later in his life, God worked in such a way that he had a burden to return and preach the gospel. And he was held back by his church leaders.

And he appealed. And it was rejected. But he continued to carry the burden.

And continued to pray. And continued to seek the Lord. 25 years later, he was finally sent as a missionary.

And was very effective in Ireland. And brought many people to the Lord. Thousands.

And many, many churches. And at the end of his life, some of the men gathered around him. And one of them lamented a little bit.

You know, think about how much you could have done if those 25 years wouldn't have been wasted like that. How much more you could have done. And he rebuked the man.

He said, no, don't think that way. God used that. That was all part of God's plan.

And if we had gone ahead in the time when my elders were saying no, we might have won hundreds. But we wouldn't have won the thousands. I'd like to just read this verse that I read this morning that I think is so precious.

If you're finding yourself in a situation where it's really tough and difficult. And things are looking impossible. Verse 25 in John, chapter five, it says, Verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming.

And now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God and they that hear shall live. So if you're in this situation where it's tough and it seems like everything is dying. Hear the voice of the Lord.

I really did appreciate how Paul brought out that that pray as he wrote it down is really it's that relationship with the Lord. And know that if you seek that and that we hear his voice, we shall live. Thank you for listening.

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