

Good morning church family. Good morning. Take your Bibles and turn with me if you will to Mark chapter 11. Mark 11. We're going to be in verses 27 through 33 to finish out this chapter. So we're getting ever closer to the crucifixion, coming closer and closer, and we're seeing things develop. So Mark chapter 11, verses 27 through 33. Once you've found that text, if you would, please stand with me in honor of the reading of the word of God today. Mark chapter 11, verses 27 through 33. It reads, then they came to Jerusalem. And as he was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him and began saying to him, by what authority are you doing these things? Or who gave you this authority to do these things? And Jesus said to them, I will ask you one question and you answer me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men? Answer me. And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, if we say from heaven, he will say, then why did you not believe him? But if we say from men, they were afraid of the crowd for everyone was regarding John to have been a real prophet. And answering Jesus, they said, we do not know. And Jesus said to them, neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. This is the word of the Lord. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we are so grateful that you have gathered us here together. We're so grateful that the rough morning that we had was by your grace overcome, that we might gather and sing your praises, that we might revel in your word, revel in the authority that we see revealed here in our text today. We pray, Lord, that you will open each of our hearts, that your spirit would open our minds, that we would understand the text, that you would, by your grace and through the working of the spirit, apply it to our lives, that we would be drawn closer to you in a deeper and ever growing Relationship of praise and admiration for you are the only one worthy of praise I pray Lord that you would remove any distractions for me any hindrances That you would help me to speak the words of this text I acknowledge that I'm utterly dependent upon you Lord and pray that you would use me as a vessel to teach your people We love you and praise you and we do all that we do for your glory in your name. I pray amen All right, you can be seated So Mark chapter 11, we're going to wrap up the chapter today. And the title of the message is the question of authority, the question of authority. If you recall from last week, we left off with Jesus going in and clearing or at least a portion of the temple in the court of the Gentiles. And towards the end of that, we see him giving explanations of faith and those kinds of things all built around the fig tree in the enacted parable of the fig tree. And we saw him giving that explanation on their way back to Jerusalem. So when they found the fig tree withered, it was on their way back to Jerusalem. And now in our text today, they've arrived there. So this is picking up immediately after our text from last week. There's no big time shift or anything like that. It's literally that same day. It was only a two mile walk, so it wasn't very much longer that we're gonna pick up in our text today. And keep in mind, because it's going to be relevant later,

that the scribes in verse 18 of the last text that we went through began to seek ways to destroy him because they were astonished, the crowd was astonished at his teaching, similar to Mark chapter 1, when they had the questions about the authority and how he was teaching with authority and how it was so different from the religious leaders of that day. Because that's going to impact the question that the Sanhedrin is bringing to him today. Now this is the first of seven encounters between Jesus and the religious leaders. So we're gonna see consecutive encounters, multiple conflicts where he's going to be addressing the religious leaders specifically. We'll see the Pharisees addressed later on in 12, the Sadducees addressed in 12, scribes addressed in chapter 12 as well. So we're gonna see multiple interactions now, this being the first one where he's in actual conversation with the Sanhedrin, those groups make up the Sanhedrin. And so with all the altercations that we've had, we kind of know how Jesus handles the religious leaders. We know kind of expect what to hear from him and that's no different than today's text because he handles it in just the most beautiful way and there's so much packed into this text. I'm very excited about it today because really what we are going to get to see is a clear example, clear example of his authority. And that's ultimately what comes down to for the Sanhedrin. They ultimately have an issue with Jesus, not so much because he claims to be the Messiah or is showing himself to be the Messiah, but because he is taking the authority away from them. And ultimately, that's where there becomes a much deeper issue. So we're going to be revisiting the idea of exousia. Many of you who are here with me in the beginning of Mark, when we first talked about his authority in chapters one and two, you might remember that term exousia. It's a Greek word for divine authority. So it's spelled E-X-O-U-I-S-A. And that is a very specific Greek word that tells us the divine authority that he is commanding, that he is showing and revealing about himself. So as we dig in here, keep in mind of the authority of the one that we serve, and we're gonna see him reveal that even more today. So to dig in here, the first point this morning is the Sanhedrin's challenge, the Sanhedrin's challenge. So he has left the temple yesterday in the timeline of Mark. He left the temple yesterday after cleansing it. They went home, rested. They were on their way back at the end portion of our text last week, and now he's back in Jerusalem. And he goes straight back to the temple. Immediately going back to his primary focus of his ministry in Jerusalem in the Gospel of Mark is in the temple. And he's pushing back against the distortion of the Jewish nation and the Sanhedrin specifically and what they have done to essentially adulterate what God intended for the temple. And we talked about that quite a bit last week. Now the Sanhedrin to give you some information about them because it's really important to understand who they are. So as he was walking in the temple in verses 27 and 28. In fact, let me reread that to refresh our memory, verses 27 and 28 in chapter 11. Then they came again to Jerusalem and as he was walking in the temple the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to him and began

saying to him, by what authority are you doing these things? Or who gave you this authority to do these things? Now, the description of chief priests and scribes is another way of describing the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin itself was a group of men made up of 71 individuals comprised of chief priests, scribes and elders. And then among those men would be Pharisees and Sadducees and different groups like that, all represented from the Jewish religious organization, if you will. And the interesting thing about them is the amount of power that this 71 person group held. They were the absolute authority in all things religion related to religion in the nation of Israel the absolute highest authority if they said it That's what it that's what they that's what was expected to have happen, but not only did they have the religious authority absolute supreme religious authority But they also held a lot of political power as well. They were considered kind of like the buffer between Rome and Israel. And so that would be where Rome would conduct their conversations or directions or the Jews would bring up issues to the Sanhedrin who would then take it to Rome. So they have immense absolute religious control and power and then a hefty political power as well. And we'll see that played out later on in Jesus's life whenever they turn Jesus over to Rome. So it's important to understand the Sanhedrin and who they are and the amount of authority that they have, because everyone, all the people, the crowds, the Jewish nation, looked to them for answers. This is who they went to. They controlled the entire temple and all of its cult practices. They controlled the money coming in and out of the temple. Their goal was to keep their authority. They enjoyed being in charge, as we can see when they come questioning Jesus because it seems like the crowd is becoming more enamored with this Nazarene than they were with them. So in this particular episode, we see here that the text that we have, Jesus coming to Jerusalem and the elders and scribes come to him and ask him, what authority are you doing? By what authority are you doing these things? Now, it's interesting that they would come and ask him this, because as you look through Mark as a whole, this is not the first time that Jesus has shown his authority. It's not the first time that he's done something outside of the strict Sanhedrin religious code. In fact, in chapter two, he presumes to forgive sins. Later on in chapter two, he accepts sinners. He calls a tax collector into his own personal fellowship in Chapter 2, which was unheard of. He redefines the Sabbath later on towards the end of Chapter 2. He says he's going to lay an axe to the root of the oral tradition in Chapter 7. And then eventually, we will see eventually that he will remove the, or excuse me, we just saw last week that he is pushing back on the temple practices themselves. So he is showing his authority on multiple different occasions. And it's important to remember that because on a lot of those occasions, the religious leaders were there, at least maybe not this particular person who's talking to him now, but the group of religious leaders have observed this throughout his ministry in Israel. So this is not the first time that they have seen him pushing back against their authority or teaching with authority. And so I

want to make that point clear because it seems like when you read the text and it's just he cleared the temple and now they're coming to ask of him. This is almost like the icing on the cake or the straw that broke the camel's back. Then coming into the temple to disrupt the normal cult practices of the Jewish temple was like a final straw. So now the Sanhedrin themselves is getting involved. And so as they've come to ask him this, you have to remember that their motivations, based on last week's text, is not seeking the truth from Jesus. That's not their motivations. We've seen multiple people throughout Mark who sought the truth from Jesus. Gentiles that sought the actual truth. People that came trying to seek the actual truth. But we've also seen people who came for their own devices, right? Do you remember the rich young ruler? He came for his own motivations. The Sanhedrin is very similar to that. They're coming with their own motivations. They aren't truly trying to find out about Jesus. They are simply trying to get rid of the one who is questioning their authority. And so as Jesus has begun his ministry here in Jerusalem, the leaders have finally had enough. It's come up to the point where the Sanhedrin fills the need to get involved and they question his authority. Now it's very interesting that they would come and do this in the temple, their own ground. They have waited for him to come back. He's here now, and they're questioning his authority, the one who created all things. Jesus, the Nazarene, the Messiah, the one they have been waiting for, the one who has revealed himself on multiple different occasions, is now being questioned by the very nation that he established to bring about the Messiah. It's just such an ironic interaction. Such an ironic interaction and Mark is full of irony. He makes sure to make this point here. So our first point is the Sanhedrin's challenge. Now, as a point of application, I want us to understand, and we have to keep this in mind throughout our text today, who Christ is and who it is with his, and why he has, excuse me, the true authority. I want to give you a couple of different verses to establish the authority of Christ, because we need to keep in the back of our mind who it is that Christ is. Colossians chapter one and verse 16. First of all, Christ has authority because he created all things. Colossians chapter one and verse 16 says, for in him, all things were created, both in the heavens and earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things have been created through him and for him. So we know that Christ has authority because he is the creator. But not only is He the Creator, if you continue reading in Colossians chapter 1 and verse 17, He also sustains all things. It reads, and He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. Not to mention are all those things true, that He is the Creator, that He does sustain everything, but He's also the one that revealed Himself to us in His Word. It is His Spirit that inspired the very words that we get our knowledge about Him from. 2 Timothy 3.16, all Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness. The Scripture is Theonoustos, God breathed out. And so to establish the authority of Christ here in our

first point, the application is we must keep his authority in mind. Because so quickly in our lives, we lose track of who Jesus is, don't we? We really do. How quickly do we forget that he is the creator of all things? How quickly in our minds do we echo the words of Satan in Genesis when he said, did God really say? Because when you do question the scriptures, you are in essence questioning the authority of Christ himself. We are no different than the Sanhedrin. Where do you get the authority to do this? So our first point of application is simply recognizing, establishing and recognizing that Christ is the authority, we are not. And we're gonna elaborate more on that as we go through. But I want us on this first point to not identify with the Sanhedrin. Don't let yourself come to be the one who comes and says, by what authority do you do these things? We things of the dirt do not have any place questioning that authority. Number two, Jesus's counter challenge. Verses 29 through 30. Let me reread those. And Jesus said to them, I will ask you one question and you answer me and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men? Answer me. So as I've already mentioned, and I want to give you a few more examples, because my goal in this message today is to reinforce the authority of Christ to the point where it's coming out of your ears. Because that is what we confidently rest in every single day as believers. And in our tumultuous world right now, do we need an authority that we can trust? Do we need an authority that we can depend on? Do we need an authority that never fails and never makes a poor decision? Yes. And so my goal, my prayer on this message today is that each one of us as believers leave this building with absolute confidence in the authority of the one that we serve. And so to give you some more ideas of his divine authority, if you recall in chapter three of Mark, Jesus binds the strong man, the strong man, excuse me. We've already talked about him forgiving sin. He claims authority over the Torah and the Sabbath. And then he replaces himself, or places himself, excuse me, as the replacement for the true temple. He is now the locus dei, which is the place of God, the location of God, where we see him, where we find God. We see him referencing God as Abba. And to seal the deal as if those other things didn't clearly point to who he is and his authority He takes upon himself the term I am In chapter 6 in verse 50 and he'll do it again in chapter 14 in verse 62 and if you know the Old Testament I am is the title for Yahweh for God alone and So I'm again giving you more places that he establishes his authority. And the reason I'm doing this is because I want you to understand he has already revealed this to the Sanhedrin. They have witnessed all of this. And his question, coming back to them, draws their attention back to something they were even a witness of themselves. So as Jesus replies here, He does what most of the time in normal rabbinic practice is answer a question with a question. In Jewish rabbinic teachings, it was very common if a rabbi was to come and ask a question, the common practice was to reply with a question. Anybody ever been in a debate with your kids and you can't get a straight answer because they just keep asking questions back? That was

normal for them. So whatever Jesus answers with this question, that is a normal practice. And so he asked, he asked, let me ask you one question you answer me and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things was the baptism of John from heaven or from men. Answer me. Now at a cursory reading, just reading through it, it almost looks as though Jesus is trying to change the subject, doesn't it? Well, I didn't ask anything about, the sinner didn't ask anything about baptism or John. Why would Christ point to John's baptism in response to the question? Well, in fact, Jesus is not trying to sidestep the question or to change the subject. He's drawing their attention back to the very thing that revealed and established for humankind to see his authority on earth. Now he always had the authority, so I'm not saying this particular act gave him authority. It simply revealed the authority that he had. But if you remember what happened at John's baptism. John's baptism of Jesus. Jesus went into the water. And what happened? When he went under the water, the heavens opened, the voice of God the Father himself echoed down to the people, claiming him as his son that he is well-pleased in, and the Spirit of God itself descended upon Jesus in the manner of a dove. So he is pointing them back to the very place that God the Father established and showed and revealed Christ's authority to them. And when I say them, I do mean the religious leaders. Because Matthew 3 and verse 7 tells us that the Pharisees and Sadducees came up for his baptism and John spoke to them. And so we know the Pharisees and Sadducees at least were aware of John's baptism and with what kind of baptism John did. Now I can't say for sure these particular men that's speaking to him today were the ones that were present at the baptism of Jesus. But it's very clear the religious leaders were at least observing John preaching in the wilderness, performing the baptisms because there's an entire conversation that we know in Matthew that was had between John and the religious leaders. And so this question here from Jesus is not one of sidestepping, but it's one pointing them back to the very revelation, the establishment of his authority on earth for mankind to see. So he's simply bringing them back to the point where they should have already known and acknowledged his authority. And it's, a very twisting question as far as what Jesus, how Jesus articulates this to the religious leaders, because it kind of puts them in a tricky situation. If you notice, Jesus doesn't appeal to the Torah. He doesn't appeal to the two schools of thought in Jewish religion of those days, Hillel or Shammai. He doesn't appeal to anything like that. He makes them make a decision between God and man. They have to make a judgment on whether Jesus is from God or man, which is something they are not qualified to do. They cannot make that judgment. They're simply men. Because the wording of verse 30 says was the baptism of John from heaven or from men, the word heaven in many religious writings or the practices of speaking in those days, that was the word used to reference God because God's name was so holy to the Jewish community that they wouldn't speak it. They very seldom wrote it, they would have very special ceremonies to write it,

and they would not speak it so as not to blaspheme the name of God. And so we know by saying heaven, Jesus is referring this to them as God or man. So he brings them down, holds their feet to the fire on a decision that they have to make. Is my authority from God or from men? That's the ultimate question that he's asking. Because at the baptism is where that authority was established, where it was revealed to mankind. But not only would they have to admit either God or man, which they can't fully do. But they would then have to admit that everything that John said about them was true. Do you guys remember what John told them in the following verses after Matthew chapter three and verse seven? Let me read it to you. Matthew chapter three verses seven through 12. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, and this is John speaking to them, you brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, we have Abraham for our father. For I say to you that from these stones, God is able to raise up children to Abraham. and the axe is already laid at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I'm not fit to remove his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly clear his threshing floor, and he will gather his wheat into the barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. So you remember last week, the analogy of the fig tree is the exact same thing that John called the religious leaders out for at the time of his baptism when he was preaching. So the very thing that Jesus went through the temple last week and established and used the enacted parable to show that the fig tree was Israel, the temple practice, and that it was going to be withered from the roots up and removed was the exact same thing that John told them. And so for them to acknowledge that it was from God or from men, they would have to also accept John's words about them. So this is a very complex question. It's much deeper than what maybe you would read at a cursory reading or just simply reading through the text. There is a lot packed in here to Jesus's question. It's remarkable really that he so succinctly and so easily pointed them back to themselves. So John's already told them they can't rely on their heritage. They can't look to Abraham as being true followers of God. And then Jesus wraps it up with a command to answer. Answer me. It's such a beautiful response to a tricky question. Because the goal of the religious leaders, again, is not to get truth. They are trying to trap him. They are trying to get him to say something blasphemous so that they can do away with him, which they ultimately have to find people to lie to do away with him. But they come here with this mindset and Jesus beautifully turns the question back on themselves. Now I want us in a point of application for this second point. I want us to think about our own answer to the question of Christ's authority. Because these men have seen Christ's authority put on

display. They know about his baptism even if they didn't physically see it themselves. There's no doubt they know about it. They know about all the altercations because many of the altercations, if you recall, that we've read and marked between the religious leaders and Jesus, it actually records that they were sent from either the local synagogue, which is under the Sanhedrin's authority, or they were actually sent by the Sanhedrin themselves from Jerusalem to go confront him. So we know there's no doubt that they have heard of all the things that Jesus has done. This authority has been revealed to them. And so we ultimately have to question, wrestle with the question ourselves, is Jesus from heaven or from men? Every single person in this, on this earth has to answer that question. Every single person does ultimately, we as humanity have to wrestle with that question. Now we may not understand that, some people may not understand that that's ultimately what we're wrestling with, but every single human being comes down to, is it my authority or is it God's? Where do I fall? Is it Jesus or is it man? And we as believers must acknowledge and by the gift of faith can acknowledge that the Jesus has and is the ultimate divine authority. For he's Lord and by faith we acknowledge that in this life and by grace we are changed into a new creation that submits itself to that authority. And so I want you to think to yourself have I acknowledged that authority? Because ultimately, that's the question that comes down to our faith. The gift of faith changes us from a rejection of the authority that's there, or an acceptance of the authority that's there. That's ultimately where faith itself comes down to. Because by faith, we don't give Jesus the authority. And sometimes you've maybe heard the gospel presented in such a fashion. Make Jesus the Lord of your life. Jesus is already the Lord of all. Faith is the acknowledgement of that authority, the acknowledgement of who he is and a submission therein by his work within you. And so every one of us has to wrestle with that question at one point or another in our lives. And so I want to bring this question to the forefront of your mind this morning, is Jesus from heaven or from men? Because if you don't have an answer to that question in the affirmative, then you haven't acknowledged who Jesus is and that faith is not active. There's a second application of that, is that our lives should reflect that authority. Our lives as believers, if we can say that the bottom line of our faith comes down to acknowledging who Jesus is and his authority, does that not mean that we then live as though we are under that authority? And so as believers, I hope that when I ask the question, do you think that Jesus' authority is from God or from men, you can give a hearty amen that it is from God. So I would ask you, does your life reflect that you submit to that authority? Because that's where our faith then plays out by the working of the Spirit in us to live our lives by grace and the working of the Spirit in us to reflect the authority that we claim to submit to. And so the authority of Jesus is a beautiful thing for us. And it's a foundational part of who we are as believers. And it comes down to our faith and acknowledging that Jesus has and is that authority. But sometimes we



can overcorrect and forget that that also indicates how we ought to live our lives based on that authority. And so that's a very important impacting application for us as believers. And in that, it also means living according to the authority of Jesus as he commands it. And what I mean by that is in our world today, we have a high amount of people that enjoy adding extra rules to the authority of God. Do we not? Or on the flip side of that, try to take the authority of Jesus and turn it into a weak application of the commandments that he said. In other words, they take the bite out of the commandments of Christ. So we can't add or take away from the authority of what Christ commands. Our lives should exude, as believers, the authority that we acknowledge that we follow by our faith being acted out. Do you guys follow what I'm saying? Yes, lots of head nods. Okay. Because this can be a very, you may feel like I'm giving with one hand and taking with the other. I want to make sure I'm being very clear, I'm not. The authority of Jesus that we acknowledge has to be lived out as he gives it to us, not adding to it, not taking away from it. Both are equally egregious in the eyes of God. And so let us acknowledge that Jesus with a hearty amen is the authority, has the divine authority. And then we, with praise, as we did in our songs earlier, recognize him as an authority by the gift of faith. But let us not ever separate that from our lives as we live out our lives under the authority. Number three, the Sanhedrin's failure. The Sanhedrin's failure. Verses 31 through 33. And they began reasoning among themselves, saying, if we say from heaven, he will say, then why did you not believe him? But if we say from men, they were afraid of the crowd, for everyone was regarding John to have been a real prophet. And answering Jesus, they said, we do not know. And Jesus said to them, neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. Now I have to stop and give them credit for actually thinking through it. because they actually wait out the consequences of their answers, which I have to give them credit for, because in our world, that seems like a lost thing, right? Everybody's so emotional that it's just a spitfire answer of whatever it is without thinking through the consequences. So I have to give them credit for at least thinking through it. They're wrong, okay, but I have to at least acknowledge that they thought through their answers before answering, because that seems to be a lost art in our culture and society today. So they think through it, And their conundrum is quite clear, they can either acknowledge that it was from heaven. And in their focus, they say that they know the answer will be why did you not believe him? But not only will they have to answer why they don't believe John or didn't believe John, but they'll have to acknowledge by saying that all the terrible things that John said about them. not being part of the true Israel, not being brood of vipers and hypocrites and not being repentant and all the other things that John, that we read just a moment ago that John says about them, they have to acknowledge all of that. And if they answer from men, they will actually hurt the very reason they came to Jesus in the first place. So if you recall, they came to Jesus to ask about the

authority and why he has the authority to do this in response to the crowd acknowledging Jesus's authority, granting that his authority was greater than how the scribes and the Pharisees had taught. And so they have to literally acknowledge the very thing they came to get back. And so they're in quite the conundrum. They have to give an answer, but they choose not to. They give a non-answer. Ultimately, because they are too afraid of man. Ultimately, they fear man more than they fear God and His authority. And so they come back and answer with a non-answer. Verse 33, in answering Jesus they said, we do not know. Pleading the fifth is essentially what they're doing. We don't want to give an answer. Because we know they had both answers. Mark records they had both answers. They just didn't want to give one. and face the consequences of either of them. So they just answer, we do not know. Any parents in here have kids that just simply answer, I don't know, when you know they know? Parents, you know they know, but the answer's always, I don't know. That's basically what's happening here. They know they're caught, they know neither one of their answers are gonna be good, so they're just, I don't know. And so Jesus, doesn't answer either. I want to contrast with you just a moment, the inner circle versus the outer circle. You guys remember the theme that we've had through Mark over and over those of you who may have heard and been with us. But over and over, Mark uses the theme of the inner circle or the disciples, those who are given faith, those who are by faith following Jesus, and in the outer circle, those who are not. They may acknowledge Jesus' existence, they may even think there's something special about him, but they don't have that gift of faith, and you see that pattern throughout Mark. Notice how Jesus replies differently to those who are outside the circle than he does to those who are inside the circle. Over and over and over again, if you look back through Jesus' replies and answers to disciples' questions and Him wanting to teach them in the crowds, what does He say to them? Truly I say to you, Truly I say to you, so those who have faith Jesus ministers to and he answers their questions even when they don't get it. And how many times have we seen the disciples not get it throughout Mark? Over and over and over, they just don't get it yet. But because they are his, he answers them, truly I say to you and grows them in sanctification and renews their knowledge and changes their minds through the working of his spirit and his word. But here, contrasted with those who do not have faith, his reply is, neither will I tell you. Neither will I tell you. It's such an interesting contrast in the words as he answers them. He held up to what he said. He said, I'm not gonna answer you unless you can answer me. They chose not to answer, so he did exactly what he said he was going to do. But the wording he chooses to answer shows us the difference between those who have faith and those who do not. Because ultimately, the disciples didn't understand who Jesus was fully either, did they? Haven't we seen that example over and over and over again? The Sanhedrin doesn't understand who Jesus is. The difference is they have not been chosen by God to receive the gift of faith. And the answer from Jesus to

those who do not have the gift of faith is, neither do I say to you, or neither will I say to you. Whereas those who are part of the flock of Christ, he says, truly I say to you as he continues to mold us and teach us in his image. So as a point of application on this last point, ultimately what it comes down to for these religious leaders is they are more afraid of men than they are of God. Now to piggyback on our last application, we have to acknowledge and live out the authority that we claim to submit to, correct? And sometimes that means standing against the backlash of man. Because ultimately the Sanhedrin, although they did not have the gift of faith, were fearful of man more than they feared God, right? They were more worried about what the crowd would think about them. But how often do we, who do have the gift of faith, have the same struggle? that the fear of man causes us to do or not to do what we should be doing or not doing. Fear of man has done immense damage to the church. And the scriptures warn us against this very thing. Turn with me if you will to Matthew chapter 10. Matthew chapter 10. I'm gonna read a rather lengthy passage, but it goes so well with this text in our application. We're gonna read verses 24 through 39. Matthew chapter 10, verses 24 through 39. And I want you to hear the words of Christ. This is him teaching about discipleship, what it means to be a follower of his, what it means to submit to his authority. Because he's gonna tell us very clearly. Verse 24, a disciple is not above his teacher nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household. Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. When I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light. And what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for an Assyrian? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your father? But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not fear. You are more valuable than many sparrows. Therefore, everyone who confesses me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father and a daughter against his mother and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's enemies will be the members of his household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. He who has found his life will lose, and he who has lost his life for my sake will find it." This gives us a plain teaching on discipleship, following Christ and not fearing man. And that's our last point of application. We cannot fear man. If the true authority in all of creation, in all the universe,

in time and space is Christ, we've all acknowledged that, right? Can I get a hearty amen? Do we all acknowledge that? Then what do we have to be afraid of? We serve the King and Creator of the universe. That should give you chills. What do we have to fear from anything or anyone in this creation when he's the one that created it? But how often do we not acknowledge and remember that authority? How different would our lives be if that was something that was at the forefront of our minds? The authority of the one that we serve is greater than all things around me. How much more confidently would we point people to Christ if we weren't afraid of what they thought about us? And we have nothing to fear. And even when it comes to the point of not even just physical danger, because the text in Matthew 10 tells us about the physical dangers and bringing swords and those who will hate us and taking up our cross, and it has a lot about persecution and that mindset of being physically harmed for Christ. Most of us in this room don't have to worry about physically harmed, being physically harmed for Christ, do we? And yet, we so quickly forget the authority of the one that we serve. that we don't do what we are to do just because we want people to like us or to not dislike us. Right? And so I would call all of us, myself included in this, this was very hard for me to study and put together this week, because sometimes I forget the authority that I'm under. I forget the authority that I'm under is also the one that everyone else is under as well, and that he is the sovereign one in control. And I don't have to worry about anything. I don't have to worry about what people think. I don't have to worry about what people are going to do to me. I don't have to worry about where my next meal is coming from for myself and my family. Now, I'm given a command to work. I'm not taking anything away from that. But my point is that the ultimate one that I serve, the king of the universe, the one who created everything is my father, who I'm united with, and it is his authority that the entire creation rests under. What do I have to fear? Because fear is the opposite of faith, isn't it? And so I'd call each of us to stand up for the truth of Scripture, to stand up for the One who has united us with Himself, who has commanded us by His authority to act out His authoritative commands, calling the world around us to look to Him. And then we also, in confidence, should look and keep our eyes fixed on the one who at this very moment is seated on the throne of grace at the right hand of the Father. This very moment. He's already Lord, guys. Not something he has to earn, not something he has to go get. He is Lord and King of all. Let us rest in that. That is a beautiful thing that we are, by grace, given the gift of faith to acknowledge that authority and to live under it, resting in the knowing that He has control over all. And so I pray that this text today has reinforced the foundation, thickened the foundation of your faith and the authority of the one that we serve. In conclusion, we've seen Jesus establish his authority firmly. There's no doubt. By him pointing back with that very question, he was pointing to God establishing his authority on earth. It cannot be denied. We saw that today. And through the work of the Spirit in us, we have that gift of

faith that we get to acknowledge that. Let us stand firm in the authority of our Savior. And as we go forward, we're gonna see him exercise that authority in his continued rejection of the temple and the Sanhedrin and the adulterated version of the worship of God that the Jews have made the Old Testament commands. And we're gonna ultimately see that Jesus is the locust day, the place of God, the place that we find God himself by his great work on the cross. The very tearing of the temple veil tells us what he accomplished with his death. And what beautiful, beautiful picture that's gonna be when we get there as we continue to march through Mark. So my prayer today is that you leave here confident in the one who you serve, who has the ultimate authority, who's ruling over all, and that we take that authority seriously as we live our lives day to day. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we are so thankful for your grace. We are so thankful for the revelation and reaffirmation of your authority. Lord, I pray that if anyone in here does not acknowledge your authority by faith, but this has, by the working of your spirit, made them seek that authority, they would find someone around them to speak to the elders, the deacons that let us show them the truth of your scriptures, that we might have an opportunity to do that. And then every believer in here, Lord, I pray that this is a reaffirming confidence in who we serve. a challenge that you will use with your spirit from your word to help us to live out our lives by that authority, not fearing those around us, not fearing what the world can do to us, but to live out as fearless disciples of you, the commands that you have given us. I pray all of this in your holy name. Amen.