

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Jesus Asserts His Authority
Mark 11:15-18, 27—12:12

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Contact a person who is perceived as an authority figure in the community (mayor, pastor, school principal, fire chief, etc.) and ask if they would be willing to be interviewed at your home church meeting on the subject of authority. Provide them with the questions you will ask.

Bible Study Leader:

Worship Time Leader:

Music Sources:

“The Solid Rock”. *Baptist Hymnal*, 1991, #406

“More Precious than Silver”. *Maranatha Praise*, 3rd Edition, #237

“I Stand In Awe”. *Maranatha Praise*, 3rd Edition, #119

“Oh How He Loves You and Me”. *Baptist Hymnal*, 1991, #146

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***Jesus Asserts His Authority*****Focal Text**

Mark 11:15-18, 27-12:12

Background Text

Mark 11:1-12:44

Main Idea

Jesus' actions and his teachings demonstrated his authority as the Son of God.

Question to Explore

Who's in charge here?

Teaching Aim

To help the class identify implications for life from Jesus' demonstration of his authority through his actions and his teachings.

Gathering together:

Welcome the dignitary or visitor you have invited to represent authority. Introduce the person making sure to mention the position they hold in the community. Tell the group the visitor has agreed to be interviewed about his/her role and the authority that comes with it.

Leader to visitor: *"How did you become _____ (mayor, pastor, teacher, chairperson, or whatever position the visitor holds)?"*

Leader to visitor: *"What kind of decisions are you responsible for?"*

Leader to visitor: *"How many people are under your leadership?"*

Leader to visitor: *"What does your authority allow you to do that others cannot do?"*

Leader to visitor: *"How important is it to you that you have power to make changes that affect other people?"*

Leader to visitor: *"What do you most enjoy about authority?"*

Thank your guest and invite them to remain for the duration of the service if they wish.

First thoughts:

Two thousand years ago the temple in Jerusalem was the most important evidence to the Jews that they were God's chosen people. The sight of the solid and beautiful temple gleaming on the mountaintop reassured them that God would always be with them. They didn't realize that God Himself had arrived in flesh and blood in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Those in authority and the religious leaders in particular rejected Jesus and all his teachings.

The temple then was used in the interests of cultural, mercantile, and religious groups, and had lost its significance as the dwelling place of the Most High God. Not many years after Jesus' crucifixion, the temple was demolished by the Romans.

The building the authorities and the religious leaders loved was destroyed and only a portion of the foundation remained. Though built upon a rock-solid foundation the beautiful structure was not able to withstand the Roman onslaught.

Our lives need to be grounded on something more solid than a mountain, more sure than silver or gold, and more significant than power or position. Jesus surpasses all of these.

Let's sing "The Solid Rock".

Closing the Gathering Time:

Read Psalm 146 as a prayer.

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Jesus Asserts His Authority

Focal Text

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Introduction to your personal study:

It usually happens among children on the playground. Arguing over who is in charge, sooner or later one will shout, “You’re not the boss of me!” What they mean is that they do not accept the other’s authority. On the playground, authority is usually bestowed by age, size, strength, or position. Until one acknowledges the other’s authority they will not submit.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you as well.

The essence of sin is refusing to acknowledge God's authority. In these passages Jesus asserted his authority as the Son of God. He cleansed the temple so true worship could take place. But the religious leaders refused to submit to his authority. By rejecting Jesus they would stand under God's judgment.

Chapter 11 begins a new section of Mark's gospel. From this point on the events take place in or around Jerusalem and climax with Jesus' crucifixion (Chapters 14-15) and his resurrection (Chapter 16). Chapters 11-13 focus on the last week of Jesus' earthly life and ministry, specifically the events that led up to his death.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Mark 11:15-18 – “My House Will be Called a House of Prayer”

The Setting: The temple in Jerusalem of Jesus' day was a huge complex, covering some 35 acres of land and took decades to build. It consisted of a series of courts. The first and outermost was the Court of the Gentiles, into which anyone from any nation could come, but beyond it no Gentile could go under threat of death. Next was the Court of the Women, beyond which no Jewish woman could go. Next was the Court of the Israelites where Jewish men could bring their offerings and hand them to the priest. Further in was the Court of the Priests, and beyond that was the Holy Place, the temple building proper. At the far end of the Holy Place, behind a thick veil was the Holy of Holies, where only the high priest could enter and only on one day of the year.

The outer court of the temple, the Court of the Gentiles, had become a marketplace of sorts. Merchants sold animals appropriate for sacrifices in the temple for a handsome profit. “Doves” were the prescribed offering for the poor who could not afford a larger animal (cf. Leviticus 14:22; Luke 2:22-24). Every Jewish man was required to pay the annual temple tax of a Jewish half-shekel (cf. Exodus 30:11-16; Matthew 17:24-27). Foreign currency was not accepted in the temple, so money could be exchanged there at the temple – for an exchange fee. The temple of God had become a place for profiteering, materialism, and greed. To make matters worse, the people of Jerusalem had also made the temple a short cut between the city and the Mount of Olives, so the temple court became a scene more of an oriental marketplace and a busy city street than of a place of worship.

One can imagine a Gentile worshiper coming to the temple to draw close to God in prayer. Instead of being greeted by voices rising in prayer to God, he would hear the clamour of barnyard animals, the bickering over prices, the clanking of coins, and the hubbub of moving crowds. Instead of smelling the sweet wafting incense of prayer and worship, he would be greeted by the stench of animal filth. Instead of being ushered to a place of quietness and soulful reflection, he would be jostled by hurried pedestrians. Instead of being drawn to God in a spirit and attitude of worship, he would be driven away by the uncaring and selfish attitude of God's own people.

This was the scene that Jesus saw that Monday morning. Jesus had earlier seen all of the commerce taking place there (11:11), and now he began to set things straight. "Jesus entered the temple area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts." Jesus sought to put an end to the corruption passing for worship in God's house. Like cursing of the fig tree that had put forth no fruit (11:12-14), Jesus pronounced God's judgment on the religious business his own people were trying to substitute for true holiness. God sought their worship, but they responded with religion and religious activity. The Jews were busy with their hands and lips, but their hearts were not involved (cf. Psalm 51:16-17; Isaiah 29:13). They were more interested in making money and their own personal convenience than offering holy respect and honour to God.

"Is it not written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." Jesus quoted from two passages in the Old Testament (Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11). Isaiah had prophesied that the Gentiles (i.e. "nations") would have a place among the people of God and in his temple. But in Jesus' day the Gentiles were relegated only to the outer court of the temple, the court that had turned into a marketplace and thoroughfare. The Gentiles were given no place to worship God. By clearing out the merchants and the pedestrians, Jesus opened a place for the Gentiles in God's temple. God's house was to be "a house of prayer for all nations."

Jesus cleansed the temple with God's own authority, for he claimed to sweep the evil from his own house ("My house"). The Jewish leaders had turned God's temple into "a den of robbers," and very soon the temple itself would be destroyed and all religious activity on that hill would cease (cf. Mark 13:1-2). The church (i.e. Christians) would soon be recognized as the new temple of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17). The sacrifice of Jesus' own life, the perfect sacrifice that brings sinful people into fellowship with God (Hebrews 9:12-14), would make no other sacrificial system necessary.

In cleansing the temple Jesus signed his own death warrant. The religious leaders began looking for ways to kill him (v. 18), but they could not do anything to him publicly because Jesus was too popular with the crowds.

Mark 11:27-33 – "By What Authority?"

Three groups of religious leaders (chief priests, teachers of the law, and elders) approached Jesus at a later time when he was once more in the temple courts. These were probably a representative group from the Sanhedrin, the high court of the Jews. "By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you authority to do this?" They wanted to know who gave him the right to cleanse the temple (11:15-18). They acknowledged their own authority as guardians of the temple, but who gave Jesus an authority greater than theirs?

Jesus responded to their question with one of his own. Their response to his question would be the answer to their own question. "John's baptism – was it from heaven, or

from men? Tell me!” John the Baptist had preached repentance of sins, had baptized people as a sign of their forgiveness, and had preached boldly of the “coming one” greater than him who would serve with God’s power and baptize with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:1-8). Where did John get his authority? Did he preach the truth or a lie?

The religious leaders were in a dilemma. If they acknowledged John’s authority as being “from heaven,” then they must respond to the truth of John’s message. They must repent, be baptized, and believe on the one who would follow John (i.e. Jesus). If they disavowed John’s authority as being merely “from men,” then the crowds would revolt against them. Their only way out was to confess that they could not decide, “We don’t know.” They in essence confessed that they could not determine when God was at work. They could not recognize God’s activity. As such, they confessed that they had no right to be spiritual leaders of God’s people.

In the presence of such wilful unbelief, Jesus replied, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.” He received his authority from “from heaven” (i.e. from God) just like John the Baptist, but the religious leaders refused to acknowledge the truth. They must willingly submit themselves to the evidence. If they truly wanted to know the answer they could easily see it. There are no eyes so blind as those who refuse to see.

Mark 12:1-12 – “The Stone the Builders Rejected”

Jesus told a parable explaining who he was. The parable’s meaning was so clear it needed no explanation, and the religious leaders showed that they easily understood Jesus’ meaning (v. 12). Jesus described a well-prepared vineyard owned by a man who went away on a journey. In his absence, he rented the vineyard to some farmers who would pay him rent from the produce of the vineyard. The owner sent a servant to collect the rent, but the tenants abused him. The owner sent many other servants, but the wicked tenants either beat them or killed them all. Finally the owner sent his own beloved son, thinking that the tenants would respect him. The wicked tenants recognized the son and said, “This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.” They killed him and threw him out of the vineyard.

Jesus then asked the question, “What then will the owner of the vineyard do?” Then he immediately answered it himself, “He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” Jesus then quoted Psalm 118:22-23 as a scriptural basis for this teaching, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the capstone (or cornerstone); the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes” (cf. Acts 4:11; 1 Peter 2:7).

The “vineyard” clearly symbolizes Israel, the chosen and blessed people of God (cf. Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80:8-16; Jeremiah 2:21). The “owner” is God himself who holds all people responsible to him, especially those he has called into service. The “tenants” are the Jewish leaders who were sent as spiritual caretakers of God’s people. The “fruit” is the spiritual harvest that God expects from his people. The “servants” are the long line of prophets that God sent to call his people back to faithfulness to their

relationship with himself. The “son whom he loved” clearly refers to Jesus, whom the wicked tenants would soon kill. The “others” to whom the vineyard would be given refers to the Gentile church (i.e. Christians). The church inherits the position formerly held by Israel and receives many of the promises originally made to Israel (cf. Matthew 21:43; Exodus 19:4-8; 1 Peter 2:1-10). The church is the new Israel, the true Israel.

Jesus once more affirmed his authority with this parable. He is God’s “beloved son” (Mark 1:11; 9:7). Rejecting Jesus and his authority means rejecting God’s only way for salvation (John 3:18). He is the most important stone, the “capstone” or “cornerstone” in God’s building, and those who reject him do so at their own peril (cf. Ephesians 2:20; Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:6, 8). Those who gladly receive him will find eternal life (John 3:16).

The religious leaders were even more hardened against Jesus. But they did nothing at this moment because “they were afraid of the crowd” and what the crowd might do to them if they harmed Jesus (12:12, cf. 11:18, 32). Unfortunately, they were not afraid of God and what he might do to them if they killed his beloved son.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

These passages focus upon Jesus’ authority. As God’s own representative he cleansed the temple of corrupt worship and ungodly activity. He desires heart-felt worship from all people, and he rejects anything that hinders people from coming to him in earnest and sincere worship. Not only is he God’s representative, but he is also God’s beloved son. To reject him is to reject all means for salvation. The religious leaders refused to acknowledge who he was and his authority over them. They plotted to kill him and rejected him to their own peril.

For Personal Reflection:

- 1. What have I learned from this study?**
- 2. What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**
- 3. What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Jesus Asserts His Authority

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc. Children who stay with their parents in the Youth/Adult study should have the material on worship as suggested in **The Children's Corner** at the beginning of this **Unit** of studies. (Ask your leader who downloads the studies for those suggestions).

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Mark 11:15-18, 27-12:12

Background Text

Mark 11:1-12:44

Main Idea

Jesus' actions and his teachings demonstrated his authority as the Son of God.

Questions to Explore

Who's in charge here?

Teaching Aim

To help the class identify implications for life from Jesus' demonstration of his authority through his actions and his teachings.

Connect with Life:

As the group gathers, ask them to name some authority figures in their lives (e.g. parents, teachers, police, judge, etc.).

After they have named several, ask them:

How did they gain their authority?

Why must we submit to their authority?

What would happen if we refused to submit?

Explain that today's lesson demonstrates the authority of Jesus as the Son of God. We will see how people responded to his authority, but we need to ask ourselves, "Who is in charge of my life?"

Guide the Study:

Give a brief mini-lecture based on the study notes, describing the setting of the temple in Jesus' day.

Have someone read Mark 11:15-18. Make sure the group understands how Jesus was cleansing the temple for the true worship of God.

Ask: According to this passage, what did God expect to take place in his temple? (prayer, worship for all people).

Now offer this question: What was going on instead? (religious activity, business, profiteering, etc.)

Next, ask: On whose authority did Jesus act? (God's – "My house").

Have someone read Mark 11:27-33.

Get opinions on this: What issue were the religious leaders pursuing with Jesus (vv. 27-28)? (his authority to cleanse the temple)

Call for an answer: What was Jesus' response (vv. 29-30)? (Where did John get his authority?) Be ready to explain about the ministry of John the Baptist.

Make sure the group understands the dilemma of the religious leaders (vv. 31-32).

Point out that the evidence was plain to the leaders, but they refused to acknowledge the truth.

Briefly retell the parable Jesus told in 12:1-11.

Ask the group if they can identify whom the different parts represent (help them if needed):

the vineyard (Israel),

the owner (God),

the wicked tenants (religious leaders),
the fruit (spiritual harvest God expects),
the beloved son (Jesus),
and the “others” (Gentile Christians).

Invite an answer to this: According to this parable, who did Jesus claim to be? (God's beloved son)

Urge a response to this: According to the verses Jesus quoted, how important is Jesus to God's plan? (the capstone, or cornerstone of the building)

Encourage opinions to this vital question: According to this parable, what will happen to those who reject God's beloved Son? (They will suffer God's judgment).

Point out the reaction of the religious leaders in 12:12. Show the similarity of their reaction in 11:18 and 11:32.

Ask: Of whom were these religious leaders afraid? (the crowds)

Now pose this question: Who should they have feared? (God and God's beloved Son).

Point out how vitally important it is that **each person** personally submits to the authority of Jesus in his or her own life.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Ask someone to read 1 John 5:11-12

Now explain the difference between ***“he who has the Son”*** and ***“he who does not have the Son.”***

Ask, Have you ever let Jesus take charge of your life? Be prepared to discuss this with anyone who is interested.

Finally ask, Are there some areas of your life that you need to hand over control to Jesus? Would you silently turn those areas over to God. **(Important! Total honesty may not be appropriate for verbalizing in the group. Such a question should be left for each person to answer silently to God).**

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Jesus Asserts His Authority **Mark 11:15-18, 27—12:12**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Getting Kicked Out

Have someone read Mark 11:15-18

Say: When Jesus kicked the merchants out of the temple people took notice.

Now discuss the following:

What do you think the merchants would do?

What about the religious leaders?

How do you think the ordinary people who saw this event would react?

If you had been there, what would be your reaction?

What reasons did Jesus give for his actions?

What did he mean by “a house of prayer for all nations”? Read Isaiah 56:6-7.

It was God’s intention and plan that the Jews would share their knowledge of him with all people. It’s God’s intention that believers today would share their faith in Jesus with all people.

What things in your life does Jesus need to “throw out” so you can be part of this plan?

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Jesus Asserts His Authority***
Mark 11:15-18, 27—12:12**Beginning the Service:**

Sing several songs from those suggested or others that are appropriate.

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

We have seen from today's scripture that Jesus was concerned for all people, not just the Jews. He wanted the temple to be a place where all who sought to know God would have a place to worship. Though the temple was destroyed centuries ago, today there are many places where God is worshipped by the followers of Jesus. This home is just one place. However the work of reaching out to "all nations" with the message of salvation is not finished yet. Let's take time to remember in prayer those who have gone out from their own country to proclaim God's word to another nation or culture.

Have someone lead in prayer for those who serve God as missionaries.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

(Note to leader) This week the Sharing Time is very dependent on scripture reading. Use tabs or slips of paper to mark each scripture that you will read. Number them so

that the flow of reading is easy and sure. Practise reading each one before you arrive at the meeting.

Ultimate Authority

Introduction:

The *National Geographic Magazine* for February, 2003 features a picture of the galaxies in one small area of the sky. Each galaxy has from one to ten billion stars. 200,000 galaxies can be counted in the picture. The area beyond this picture has a hundred billion more galaxies. One of those galaxies is called the Messier-104 Galaxy. Its common name is the **Sombrero Galaxy** (named by someone who obviously never saw a real sombrero!).

(Note to leader: Show the picture of the Sombrero Galaxy included with this session).

Of the 100 billion known galaxies in that small part of God's Kingdom, this galaxy burns and shines with the heat and light of 800 billion of our suns. It is 50,000 light years across; which means that it takes 50,000 years for the explosion of a star on one side of the galaxy to be seen on the other side. Moreover, 100 billion stars exist in the galaxy's heart in a black hole that cannot even be seen. The galaxy sits in a spot 27 million light years away from us.

At least through our eyes, God created the Sombrero Galaxy simply for the joy of doing so—for His pleasure and glory. Moreover, He seems to have done so by just speaking the whole incredible system into existence. Then He placed it 27 million light years away from us – out in that small part of His universe—just for the joy of it. Can't you hear God calling it into existence, giving it all the instructions to be what it is, and then commanding it to function at His pleasure!

Now **that** is authority—authority on a really big scale. It is that authority that calls me to kneel before Jesus Christ, King of all Kings, Lord of all Lords, and worship Him. And to think, this creator Lord of the universe and beyond, also created you and me, and loved us enough to become a human being Himself on this puny little hunk of dirt and water called earth, and then die on a cross so that you and I might have the choice of spending all eternity with Him. Oh, how He loved you and me.

Today, we will ask some questions about our “free will” and God's authority. We will study this contrast through the eyes of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

A characteristic helps describe something. We often contrast two people, places, or ideas to help ourselves understand more vividly the difference between the two. Today, we hope to learn more about God's authority by reading several scripture passages that

contrast the characteristics of human authority with God's authority through Jesus. You may want to list these sets of contrasts on a sheet of paper as we describe them.

1. Human authority tends to demand loyalty.

God's authority (Divine authority) commands loyalty.

A few years ago, a Christian denomination elected one of their former pastors to lead their group of churches. In his first meeting with his associates, he told his staff that they must accept his leadership. He said, "I demand loyalty!" Those working under his new leadership were surprised at and disturbed by his blunt statement.

The difference between the Latin prefix "deo" (pronounced day-o) or "de" and the prefixes "co" or "com" is the original difference in the words demand and command. The first was a mandate from a god, a deity (ultimate authority). The second signifies a mutual decision by two or more beings. But, surprisingly in the Bible, the "deo" is mentioned 3 times and only for military officers or religious leaders. The "com" is mentioned over 100 times, many in reference to God. In other words, our God, the real God, always gives us the option to say "No".

Read: Luke 7:8 (The centurion asks Jesus to heal his servant)

The centurion may not have fully understood Divine authority, but he certainly knew that Jesus had authority from God. And he knew with certainty that Jesus deserved loyalty without force or demands of any kind. This officer of the powerful Roman army recognized that Jesus commanded his loyalty without Jesus ever having to issue a single order.

2. Human authority is, by its nature, self-serving.

God's authority always seeks to serve others.

Read: Matthew 28:12-14 (The authorities pay the tomb guards to lie)

The religious and secular authorities only wanted to protect themselves. So, they rejected the obvious truth in favour of a lie.

Read: Matthew 20:25-28 (Jesus contrasts human leaders and spiritual leaders)

3. Human authority depends on human wisdom and abilities.

God's authority depends on God's wisdom and abilities.

Read: Matthew 9:5-7 (Jesus compares human abilities and His abilities as God's authority)

4. Human authority changes with the situation.

God's authority changes the situation.

In a certain town in Alberta, Canada, one group of homeowners became afraid that a child might be hit by cars that refused to obey a stop sign at a dangerous intersection near their houses. They complained to the town officials, requesting that something be done. In a few days, the officials replaced the stop sign with a "Yield right-of-way" sign, allowing the drivers to avoid having to stop at all. When questioned, they replied, "Since no one obeyed the law, we just changed the law." None of the officials seemed worried about the consequences of their silly decision.

Read: Matthew 28:1-7 (The authority of God changes the future of the world)

In these few verses, God changed much more than the situation. He changed the whole course of history!!!

5. Human authority limits or restricts their people. God's authority frees His people.

Read: Matthew 7:28-29 (The crowds respond to Jesus' authority)

Matthew explains that Jesus was teaching with real authority; authority that offered them real spiritual freedom. Their religious teachers had been teaching the need to obey hundred of laws regarding every aspect of their lives if they wanted God to accept them.

6. Human authority is fallible. (It can be wrong) God's authority is infallible. (It can never be wrong)

Read: Matthew 28:18 (Jesus claims total authority from God)

Everyone who proclaims the gospel is fallible. This is why preaching is sort of scary. In a Bible study, people will question, debate, and accept differences of opinion. But many go to hear a sermon and expect perfect, God-breathed truth from the preacher. If they disagree, they may completely reject the preacher, the church, or even God, himself.

Also, today we seem to have an extraordinary need for heroes, especially Christian heroes. We try to find someone whom we can absolutely depend on and follow. So we set up people like Billy Graham, Billy Kim, Rick Warren, Beth Moore, and others as infallible teachers and guides. It is good to have persons that we can admire and respect. And each of these has proven to be an excellent role model and teacher. But we must be especially careful to let them be fallibly human. When all is said and done, the only real authority for us is God's authority.

**7. Human authority only reigns among certain groups of people.
God's authority reigns among all peoples of all times.**

Read: Matthew 28:19-20 (God's authority reigns from the beginning until the end of time)

Remember that we began this meeting today with a story about galaxies in God's universe. We said that it serves as an example of how complete and how wonderful is God's authority. Then we reminded ourselves that God also has complete authority over our lives. Yet, He lets us make the decision whether or not we will accept His authority in our lives. Today, each of us who know Christ as our Saviour needs to recommit ourselves to His authority. And, if anyone is here today who has never accepted Christ's authority over your life, now would be the best time possible to make that commitment. It is easy and simple to do that. But it will mean giving up your own authority in your life and giving it over to Jesus from now on.

Concluding the Service:

Pray that each person in the congregation will commit to the authority of Christ each day this week.

Sing a simple song of praise to Jesus.

