Jesus Our Authority And Our Judge
John 5:16-31

A short story as we begin our study today . . . Some years ago, while my family and I were working within a ministry to youth, we were blessed to have the popular author and speaker, Michael Pearl of "No Greater Joy Ministries", come to speak to our staff. His subject for those several sessions was one of his favorite subjects, that of "child rearing".

His perspective on the use of discipline, rebuke and training was very practical and also biblically based. I found that I fully agreed with most everything that he said.

I especially took note of one of the most basic precepts of training that he taught, that of always being very intentional in our efforts to build a foundation within our child for the acceptance and appreciation of "authority".

In that precept, he encouraged parents to begin very early in the child's life, preferably while the child is still an infant.

In the training, the child is gently and lovingly chastised for its wrong actions and habits, perhaps a light flick of a finger and the word "no" to express disapproval when the child does things such as pulling your hair or grabbing your glasses off your face.

Consistency with the training is essential or else the child will become confused.

Again, the desired intention of the training is not so much to teach the child not to pull your hair or grab your glasses. It is rather to instill within the mind of that small child a sense that there is someone in authority over them.

And while at first thought that one small venture into the "training up of a child" may not seem very big, as we study through these words of our scripture passage, we'll see that it is truly very, very important, especially as it relates to the response that we ought to have to the commands of God.

But before we begin to look at these words of our Lord, I want us to think for a moment and ask ourselves, "what is our response to the authority of God?" And "what is the right response that we should have to Him personally"?

The Scripture passage that we will study today brings that very demanding question to us. But before we read it, may we read a couple of other closely related passages as a prologue to our study.

The first is one of my most treasured passages, and it's given to us in the Book of Hebrews chapter 4. And take special note of the ending words. They specifically address this challenge. Listen, this is Hebrews chapter 4 beginning in verse 12.

> 12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Hebrews 4:12-13)

Simply put, we need to understand that as we study the precious words of scripture given to us within our bibles, they have a very unique power residing within them. As we study and examine these words of scripture, they are in turn, examining us.

Let me say that again . . . As we study and examine these words of scripture, they are in those same moments, examining us, delving deeply within our heart and our soul, discerning the thoughts and the intents that reside within us.

And these words tell us that nothing can be hidden from their powerful in-depth examination, that everything that is within us will be exposed and revealed to Him to whom we must give an account.

Simply put . . . everything that these words reveal will be brought before the "Authority" to whom we will answer, both for who we are, and for all that we have done.

And two other scripture verses come to mind about this same matter. In Ecclesiastes 12:14 we are told, "For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil".

And also in 2nd Corinthians 5:10 we read, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or evil."

Each of these scriptures tell us in no uncertain terms that we are ever and always under the authority of the Lord Jesus and that everything that we will ever do will be brought into judgment before Him as our judge, every deed, whether it be good or evil.

And yes, I know that as I say these words, your preacher at your church will often try to explain away the effects of these words, saying something on the order of, "but we are no longer under the law, we are under "grace". But dear friends, be sure to stop for a moment and understand these words. They are emphatic and they are truth and must not be explained away so as to fit someone's personal desired beliefs.

We are ever and always under the authority of our Lord Jesus. And how ever our preachers and teachers might try to mollify the meaning and intent of these words, there still remains the absolute truth that yes, each person that is born on this earth will stand before the Almighty God, the Judge of all the earth and we will give an account for everything we have ever done.

Let's pause for a moment and read the passage text that we'll study today, and as we do, take careful note that our Lord speaks very clearly about the judgment that awaits each of us, and that it is the Lord Jesus who will be the "authority", the "Judge" that we will answer to. Listen, beginning in verse 16 of John chapter 5,

> 16 . . . the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath (He had healed this man by the Pool of Bethesda and had told him to take up his pallet and walk). 17 But Jesus answered them, (the Jews) "My Father is working until now, and I am working."
> 18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.
> 19 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. 21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. 22 For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor

the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.
25 "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.
26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. 27 And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. 28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice 29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.
30 "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me. (John 5:16-30)

The question that I spoke about a few moments ago . . . What is your response, what is my response to authority. And as with the child we spoke about, the question is not so much about what is taking place at the moment, an offense of some sort, or a demand that might be made upon us. But rather, what is taking place within our heart, our mind, our soul as it relates to our response to the authority of our Lord as our limits are being tested by a difficult encounters.

Here in these words, our Lord tells us in very plain and simple words that our response ought not to be to the circumstance immediately at hand, but rather it is to be to the authority that He, the Lord Jesus, has over us.

But I do fear that the nature of most all of humankind has a natural "bent" that rejects the idea of someone else having and exercising authority over the things we do and the things we say.

Again, that one small venture into the "training up of a child" may not seem very big at first thought, but folks it is truly enormous.

If that sense of respect and appreciation for authority is well established within a child's mind from infancy, it will serve that child well as he or she encounters all of the other lines of authority that they will be required to respect and to obey during their lifetime, especially the authority of God.

All we have to do is look at the world we now live in to see that the effects of such teaching is not present. Very few of the children that we encounter today show any real grasp or appreciation for the concept of authority.

It seems that almost without exception the children, especially teenagers, are disrespectful, to their parents, to their teachers, to the law, to almost anyone that dares violate their living space. They seem at best to "tolerate" authority rather than to respect it.

And the unfortunate eventual end of disrespectful children is that they grow into disrespectful adults. And then those disrespectful adults perpetuate their disrespect by passing it on to the next generation.

May I pause and ask, "Do my words seem to be an over-statement, an exaggeration?"

Oh dear friends, I don't think so. The sad reality is that most of the people that I observe as I drive along our streets or as I shop within our stores show no boundaries in their arrogant behaviors and have little respect for any form of authority. We in today's world answer to no one except our own personal sensibilities of right and wrong.

. . . . Now with all of that being said, how do these few words that I've just given us fit into today's study? It is this!

God is our loving Father who wants to establish in our hearts and minds that there truly is an authority over us, and that authority is Him. He is saying to you and to me all through His Word, "I am God and I am someone with whom you have to do. I am not only your creator and your daily sustainer; I am also the judge over everything that you will ever think, say and do."

God is saying to us, "You may very well live out all the days of your life believing that you are unaccountable, thinking that you answer to no one, but that is just not so. I am the Judge of all that you do. And in the day of resurrection I will raise some of you to eternal life, but to others I will resurrect to eternal sufferings in hell."

God is saying to us, "Do not be like the little child that covers his eyes and thinks that no one sees him. I see when you lie down, I see when you rise up. Before a

word is on your tongue, I know it. Where can you go from my Spirit? If you rise on the wings of the dawn or go to the far side of the sea, I am there. I am always there. I will hold you close, but I will also most assuredly hold you accountable. Behold, I am your God!"

Folks, we can hear those words of God ringing throughout every generation from Moses to Jesus and also today. Listen to these familiar words given in Deuteronomy chapter 30.

> 15See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. 16For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you . . . .
> 19This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live 20and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life. (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)

And then, here again in our scripture lesson for today, we hear much the same kind of warning being given. Jesus is saying here that there will come a day when every person will stand before Him as judge of all the earth and be called into account for everything that they have ever done.
Listen again to these words of John 5,

> 25"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26"For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; 27and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man. 28"Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, 29and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment. (John 5:25-29)

Those religious leaders standing there that day might not have wanted Jesus to be in authority over them and to execute judgment over them, but that choice was not theirs to make. They might, as they did, even reject Him as having authority over them, but that did not make a difference, just as it does not make a difference with men and women of our day.

Just the mere fact of not wanting someone to be in authority over us, does not make it so.

Folks, for those men then and for you and me now, Jesus truly is in authority over us. And He truly will return someday and execute judgment over us.

Even though Jesus and the Father are truly one and equal in authority, God the Father has given over His authority to Jesus so that Jesus will have full authority to execute judgment over this earth. That truth given in Matthew chapter 28,

> [18]Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (Matthew 28:18)

In His appearance as a man that day, I'm sure that Jesus did not look as if He was worthy of such authority, but He was, and He is! He is worthy beyond our imagination. These words in Revelation chapter 5,

> "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
> to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" . . . . .
> "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
> be praise and honor and glory and power,
> for ever and ever!" (Revelation 5:12-13)

Folks, you and I are very little different from those people standing there listening to Jesus that day. It's one thing for them, and for us, to simply believe that there is a God out there somewhere, who created all things, who sustains all things and to even believe that He cares a great deal about us.

But it is an altogether different and more demanding thing to be suddenly confronted by that God and told that a day is coming and now is that every soul that has ever lived and ever will live will have to give an account to Him for everything we have ever done, even the smallest of things, whether it be good or evil.

These words that Jesus gave in this confrontation with these religious leaders were given to them, and to you and me, as simple truth. Jesus had a way of doing that. He had a way of simply speaking the truth and then letting it stand on its own.

Jesus did not chase after those men and beg them to repent and to give their hearts to God. He simply spoke the truth and let it stand.

And folks, God does not chase after you and me and beg us to repent and give our hearts to Him.

He has simply spoken the truth about His authority and about His judgment, and has left our choices to us.

Those men . . . and you and I need to ponder this truth. The Lord Jesus is saying here that He truly is the Judge of all the earth, that all power and all authority has been given unto Him, and that He will return someday and execute judgment.

The question for you and me is, "Do we truly believe that?" "Do we truly believe that Jesus has all authority over everything that we think, say and do?" "Have we truly learned acceptance and appreciation for His authority over us?"

In our final moments today, I'd like for us to look at an example of that day when Jesus will return and call us to stand before Him in judgment. That day can be seen in the "Parable of the Minas". Listen to these words given in Luke chapter 19, this is verse 12.

> "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to have himself appointed
> king and then to return. 13So he called ten of his servants and gave them
> ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I come back.'
> 14"But some of his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to
> say, 'We don't want this man to be our king.'
> 15"He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the
> servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they
> had gained with it.
> 16"The first one came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned ten more.'
> 17"'Well done, my good servant!' his master replied. 'Because you have
> been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'
> 18"The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina has earned five more.'
> 19"His master answered, 'You take charge of five cities.'
> 20"Then another servant came and said, 'Sir, here is your mina; I have kept
> it laid away in a piece of cloth. 21I was afraid of you, because you are a
> hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did
> not sow.'

22"His master replied, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked
servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did
not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? 23Why then didn't you put my
money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it
with interest?'
24"Then he said to those standing by, 'Take his mina away from him and
give it to the one who has ten minas.'
25"'Sir,' they said, 'he already has ten!'
26"He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but
as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken
away. 27But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over
them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.'" (Luke 19:12-27)

In this parable, Jesus is the nobleman. He is gone from us to be crowned king, but one day He will return with all authority having been given to Him.

When he returns, He will call all of His servants, you and me, into account for the handling of the daily affairs of our lives. And according to the words of Revelation chapter 20, we will be judged according to our works.

Some among us will receive a great reward, while others will receive less. Some will receive very little because they have been unfruitful.

Even others, those who said that they did not want Jesus to be their King, will nevertheless stand before Him and be judged. And those poor souls will be sent to everlasting damnation.

The question for us today is, "Have we learned the lesson of a small child, that there truly is someone in authority over us?"
"Do we live each of our days as if that were true?" "Do we live as if we will be called into account for every thought, every action and every deed that we do?

We will folks! We will! Listen to these words given in Revelation chapter 20 and we'll close!

11Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose
presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for
them. 12And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the
throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which

is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. [13]And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds. [14]Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. [15]And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11-15)

Pray with me.