

As Christians, we claim to be under the authority of Christ. What does it mean for our lives to be under Christ’s authority?

1. Christ’s authority is God’s authority (John 5:17-21)

In John 5:17, Jesus states, “...*My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*” This was His response to the Jews when they accused Him of breaking the Sabbath law by healing. Jesus describes how God the Father continues to work after creation by guiding Israel and sustaining all things. Thus, in healing the man, He was following the Father’s pattern rather than breaking the Sabbath law. Jesus’ statement also implies His equality with God. In the Jewish context, to call a person “Father” is to lay claim to the person’s authority and heritage. (eg. Elisha called Elijah his father, the Jews called Abraham their father). The Jews understood this and were thus angered even more because they rejected Christ’s authority (John 5:18). Today, man’s rebellion against lesser authorities is a reflection of man’s rejection of God’s greater authority.

In John 5:19-20, Jesus explains the basis of His authority. He highlights, “...*The Son can do nothing of himself...*” (John 5:19) but imitates the Father. This means that His ability is rooted in the Father and His relationship with Him. The Father shows the Son all things, even greater works (John 5:20). John 5:21-22 points to how the domain of Christ’s authority is over all. He “*quickeneth whom he will*” (John 5:21), i.e. He has authority even over death; and God alone has authority over all life and death. Thus, Christ is God Himself. Beyond physical life, Jesus has power over spiritual life, having the power to save sinners from spiritual death. Jesus also has authority over judgment, the Father “...*hath committed all judgment unto the Son*” (John 5:22). One day, we will face this judgment of God. We are accountable to God for how we live our lives right now. Christ’s authority must impact our daily living.

2. A right response to Christ’s authority (John 5:23-30)

If we claim to honour the Father, we must also honour the Son whom the Father has sent (John 5:23). To “*honour*” is to give to one what one is worth, i.e. to esteem and hold in value. Our response determines our judgment. A right response involves hearing and believing (John 5:24). This “hearing” is a continuous hearing, thus it must characterise our life. This “belief” involves a total submission, yielding our life to God’s word. Jesus promises, “*He that heareth my word, and believeth...hath everlasting life,*” i.e. a blessed life with God for ever, and that begins now.

Is the truth of Christ’s authority seen in your life? Is your life no longer your own, but submitted to the authority of Christ? Are all your cares and hopes brought before Him, in subjection to His Word? Whether or not you submit to Christ’s authority, the Father has already given Him authority over judgment. Do you live as a good steward of the life God has given you? God’s Word has the power to help you live your Christian life.

Furthermore, Jesus has authority to judge because He is the Source of all life (John 5:26), and He is the Son of man (John 5:27). He will judge both the good and the evil in that day (John 5:28-29), and He will judge justly according to the Father’s will (John 5:30). May we live our lives in light of Christ’s authority and judgment, being comforted that it is most blessed to do His will in our lives.

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