

Christ Community Covenant Church
Having the Mind of the Father: The Authority of the Table
Pastor Dave Scherrer - May 5, 2013

I want to talk today more about authority but perhaps from a perspective you have not heard about before. Today on the first of the month it is the habit for our church to offer communion. So we want to talk today about the authority of the Lord's Table. But first we need to remember the life and teachings of Christ before we enjoy the love found at His table. We remember that Jesus lingered in prayer so that he would know the will of the Father.

Having the mind of God in order to do the will of God

Why does this statement seem so difficult?

- It implies that I really and truly want to do the will of God. That is, that my heart first and foremost desires to yield my authority over my life to the Father. That I have died to self and now my will and dreams are no longer the trump value in my life.
- It implies that I am slowing down and simplifying my life so that I can intentionally and in a disciplined manner seek the mind of the Father.
- It implies that when I know the will of the Father that I have the courage to actually do the dying-to-self deal and choose to obey.

Of course there are many things we already know about the will of the Father. In Matthew 6 alone there are a dozen or more imperatives that are stated directly by Jesus:

- Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them,
- Give to the needy . . .
- When you pray . . .
- When you fast . . .
- Forgive others their trespasses . . .
- Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . .
- You cannot serve God and money.
- Therefore do not be anxious about your life, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

So thankfully there are many things we already know about the will of the Father and we must simply put them into practice.

Still there are some specifics that we must go to the Father on to know His will for me. How often should I fast? How much money should I give to the poor? What if I sense that I have indeed become concerned about the security of money more than the promises of God – how am I supposed to respond? What if I have become unforgiving and am holding a grudge? Now what? Do I just say I am sorry to God and try to stop or do I have to go to the person and confess? You see, we are constantly testing the philosophies and values of the world that we live in we are contrasting them with these new values and standards of behavior that Jesus established with the coming of the Kingdom of God.

What is a Christian Worldview?

Or for that matter what is a 'worldview' at all? A worldview is the framework from which we view reality and make sense of life and the world. "[It] is any ideology, philosophy, theology, movement or religion that provides an overarching approach to understanding God, the world and man's relations to God and the world" (David Noebel, *Understanding the Times*).

For example, a 1-year-old believes he or she is the center of his world. A secular humanist believes that the material world is all that exists, and a Buddhist believes he can be liberated from suffering by self-

efforts of purification. What we believe is critical and AW Tozer says that *what we believe about God is the single most important thing about us*. Some have said it doesn't matter what you believe about God as long as you are sincere, but Christians know that believing sincerely in a lie does not make it true.

Someone with a biblical worldview believes his primary reason for existence is to love and serve God. This love for God and for His priorities in the world change the way we live in the world. We see things through a different lens than others. So my view of the world is defined by my belief in God.

A recent nationwide survey completed by the Barna Research Group determined that only 4 percent of Americans had an orthodox "biblical" worldview. When George Barna, who has researched cultural trends and the Christian Church since 1984, looked at the "born- again" believers in America, the results were a dismal 9 percent.

Barna's survey also connected an individual's worldview with his or her moral beliefs and actions. Barna says, "Although most people own a Bible and know some of its content, our research found that most Americans have little idea how to *integrate core biblical principles to form a unified and meaningful response to the challenges and opportunities of life.*"

For example, let's suppose you have bought the idea that beauty is in the eye of the beholder (secular relative truth) as opposed to beauty as defined by God's purity and creativity (absolute truth). Then any art piece, no matter how vulgar or abstract, would be considered "art," a creation of beauty.

A biblical worldview is based on the unchanging Word of God. When you believe in the truths and priorities of the Bible, then you allow it to be the foundation of everything you say and do.

Do you have a biblical worldview? Answer the following questions, based on claims found in the Bible and which George Barna used in his survey:

- Do absolute moral truths exist?
- Is absolute truth defined by the Bible?
- Did Jesus Christ live a sinless life?
- Is God the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe, and does He still rule it today?
- Is salvation a gift from God that cannot be earned?
- Is Satan real?

Did you answer yes to these? Only 9 percent of "born- again" believers did. But what's more important than your yes to these questions is whether your life shows it. These beliefs then translate into how we view the world and the choices we make. Here are a few examples:

CHRISTIAN VIEW	SECULAR VIEW
Reduce your sense of self	Improve your sense of self
True knowledge is from God	Knowledge is from human thought
Getting ahead is losing self	Getting ahead is money and power
Narrow is the way to heaven	Wide is the way of tolerance
Serve others first	Serve yourself first
Jesus makes you good	Good deeds make you good

Our world view changes our *eschatology* answering the question "Where are we headed?" and our world view informs us on the ethical questions we face like "Is this right?" and "What should I do if I think it is?" Our worldview impacts our *praxeology* (our methodology) and helps answer the question, "How should we then live?" How we gain knowledge and what we consider to be knowledge – our new *epistemology* – tells us what is true and what is not.

Our conversation has taken us full circle.

On the night that Jesus was betrayed, **he wanted us to see the world differently**. He did things and taught things that night that continue to shape how we see the world and how we interact with the world. Jesus knew the mind of the Father and only did the mind and will of the Father. Then in His last hours He showed us His authority from the Father and encouraged us to act with the same authority and confidence. We are to see the world and act on it the same as Jesus. That's what Paul tells us in Philippians:

Philippians 2:5-12

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

You see the Lord's Table is not only a table designed to help us **remember what Christ did for us**, and help us to be grateful. It is also designed **to instruct** us how to live for others. It is prescriptive. It is a teaching table, a mentoring table, a modeling table. The Lord's Table has authority over our lives. It is not just a nice idea. It is truth and fulfilled law and the example of how to live life poured out for us to see. And like Jesus, the Table derives its power to rule in our lives from the example of humility shown there:

The Authority of the Table is in its Humility

Verse 3 of our Philippians passage says "Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but **in humility count others more significant than yourselves.**" Be careful here. The point is not to esteem others more for what they do. The point is how you **count** others to be. The focus is not on how they read or do math, or any other skill or trait. The focus is: Will you **count** them as worthy of your help and encouragement? Not **are** they worthy? But will you **count** them as worthy? Will I serve my sister? Will I take thought not just for my interests but for my roommate and my locker partner? Will I encourage someone who is marginalized and take the time to help them and build them up?

And where does that other-oriented commitment come from? Verse 3 says, "**In humility** count others more significant than yourselves." It comes from humility. Literally: "lowliness." **This is the great opposite of a sense of entitlement.** Humility is the opposite of "You owe me."

Why? Why do Christians walk through life feeling a humble sense that we owe service to people, rather than them owing us? The answer is that Christ loved us and died for us and forgave us and accepted us and justified us and gave us eternal life and made us heirs of the world when he owed us nothing. He treated us as worthy of his service, when we were not worthy of his service. He took thought not only for his own interests but for ours. He counted us as greater than himself: "Who is the greater," he said, "one who reclines at the table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves."

That is where our humility comes from. We feel overwhelmed by God's grace: bygone grace in the cross and moment-by-moment arriving grace promised for our everlasting future. Christians are stunned into lowliness. Freely you have been served, freely serve.

John 13:3-17

³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God,⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist.⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him.⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do

you wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." ⁸ Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."
¹² When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?" ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

That night, Jesus was filled with authority. He eked power and resolve and influence and truth. But the source of His authority came from His humility. The Table teaches us saying we are to:

Die to Live
Slave to be Free
Last to be First
Humbled to be Exalted

Die to self

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Gal. 2:20

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. John 12:24

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Luke 9:23

Slave to be free

But now that you have been set free from sin you have become slaves of God. Romans 6:18

Last shall be first

And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last. Luke 13:30

The Humbled will be exalted

Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. Matthew 23:12

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you. 1 Peter 5:6

The Table