



*GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion*  
*66 – Where AND What Authority*

**Announcements:**

5/2 @6:30 -

*Women's  
Bible Study*

5/3 @7:00 -

*Prayer*

5/4 @6:30 -

*Grace Group*

5/7 @8:30 -

*Sunday School*

5/7 @6:30 -

*Annual Conference  
Report*

5/8 @6:30 -

*Men's Discipleship  
- Question 9*

**ICE BREAKER:** In difficult situations would you rather lead or follow?

**READ:** Matthew 21:23-27

One of what I believe to be the most important tools that I use when preparing any sermon is what is called the “Melodic Line”. What is the Melodic line? Each book of the bible has a certain theme, a thought or something that ties the book together. Much like the melody of a song has the theme and is most likely the most memorable part, the melodic line of a book is that thing that gives the book one united voice. It is important for a few reasons. The first is that keeping it in mind means that you are more likely to be faithful to the context and heart of what the author intended. But it is also important because knowing what it is allows you to see what is different in each passage. A failure to keep it in mind might mean that you end up preaching the exact same sermon 12 times over the course of a series because you miss the slight variations on the one theme. So what, you may ask, is the Melodic line of Matthew? I would say that it is “Kingdom Authority”. (as a free bonus hint, if you ever want to know what I think the melodic line of any book is just look at the series title!).

So here then is the difficulty of a passage like the one that we have in front of us. There is little room for variation or changing a theme when the passage is so directly addressing the heart issue of the book. The authority of Jesus is called to the forefront. In many Ways I would argue that what Matthew is bringing into the forefront is the direct heart of the whole book, Where does Jesus get whatever authority that he does (or doesn't) have. And so today we will be asking those very questions. Starting with the one the Pharisees DID ask then the one that they probably SHOULD HAVE asked.

“By What authority are you doing these things?” Where did you get this authority from? This question is simultaneously very simple and also very complex. It is easy because we can say that he didn't “get it” from anywhere, he just has it. By the very nature of who he is. He is God made flesh, the image of the invisible God. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. We don't ask God where he got his authority from, he just has it, so why would we ask Jesus. That is where it is easy. But here is where it is difficult. Though he was in the form of God he did not count equality with God as a thing to be grasped. But emptied himself taking the form of a servant (Philippians 2:6-7). The authority that Jesus then operates with in Matthew, and particularly in this passage is an authority given to the Son by the Father. Still the authority of God, still intrinsic in Jesus, but here shown to us in servant form.

**DISCUSS:** Why might this distinction be important? What practical thoughts or lessons can we learn from this?

But now I would like to discuss the question I believe the Pharisees SHOULD HAVE asked, had their hearts been right. Not from where, but HOW MUCH? In Matthew so far, he has claimed the authority to forgive sins - that's a big one. But there is more. He has the authority to teach, but not just teach, but teach as truth HIS OWN WORDS (you have heard it said, but I say...). He has the authority to calm the storms, the authority to cast out demons, the authority to call and send his disciples, that's a whole lot of authority. But the full answer is given to us just a little later in Matthew. Matthew 28:18 - All authority has been given to me. If the Pharisees would have asked this question they would coil;d have heard the truth of who Jesus is, they might have had the scales removed from their eyes and truly seen Jesus. He is not just one empowered, but the one given all power, he is our only source of hope and life, he is King and Lord and savior and worthy of all glory and honor and praise!

**DISCUSS:** What is so important about Jesus having ALL authority? Are there any other examples not mentioned above you can think of? How does this offer hope and encouragement?