

traits to love us perfectly and with authority. That means what he says he does.

Part of my imperfection is that even when I have the best of intent I sometimes can't do what I promised, or I simply forget. If my life depended on me – wow is me! If my wife and kids depended on my perfect, never-forgetting love, - wow is them! I always thank Jesus that my life, wife and kids don't depend on me, they depend on Jesus.

Jesus who gave his life; born our brother, lived life intimately with us, died rather than deny us, took the punishment

due me that I might live secure in his love. Jesus who now intercedes with God for me, and has promised to come back and claim me as one of the Father's loved children. A promise he guaranteed through baptism. My life, my wife, my kids are safe in his hands.

Today Jesus invites those who know they can't do it on their own to come to him. Today Jesus invites you to spend the rest of your life in his perfect love, growing closer to him, living more and more like him. Today Jesus invites us to share his life with him living as the one of his loves with his life.

Let us pray.
Jesus, I know I fall short. I don't always do what I promise. After a great time I wake up needing to be filled again. I happily accept your invitation. Thank you for dying on the cross so that I might share life intimately with you. Please fill me with the Holy Spirit and grow me to ever greater maturity as one of the Father's loved children. Amen.

28 September 2008

By Whose Authority

Matthew 21:23-32



At the beginning of the Gospel reading Jesus was asked; 'By what authority are you doing these things?' (Matt. 21:23) Which is a fair question to ask. I don't just have anyone work on my car. I want to know their qualifications. This is true in lots of fields of life. We want to know that the person has the authority, the right qualifications to do the job.

How was Jesus to answer this question?

He could have pointed them to his baptism. It is important to note that Jesus isn't a self appointed Messiah, but only starts his ministry after his baptism. There John the Baptist, baptises Jesus as God's anointed one, God's chosen one. There the Holy Spirit descended

in the form of a dove. There the Father's voice was heard; "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17) Jesus didn't make it up, but people saw it and recorded it.

I'd be very nervous about a self appointed doctor who just walked in off the street and claiming to be a neurosurgeon and wanted to drill holes into my skull. I'd definitely want to know by what authority he was acting. I wouldn't trust a self appointed quack with my life.

Jesus is no self appointed Messiah. He only started his public ministry after John's baptism and the Father's authorisation. Jesus pointed to John, but the people who asked about Jesus'

authority didn't accept John.

How else could Jesus answer this important question?

Jesus points them to what he's doing. Match it against what the Messiah is meant to do according to God's word.

When John the Baptist asked Jesus if he was the Messiah or not, Jesus said; "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard; The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and good news is proclaimed to the poor." (Luke 7:22) Which is precisely what the Prophet Isaiah said the Messiah would do.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am

Pastor: Tim 0427326553

Edmund 0429041957



Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

Jesus isn't full of empty words, but his words and his actions are in harmony. In harmony with God's will, as clearly revealed by the Prophet Isaiah. And the people he's talking to would have known the writings of Isaiah. Many of them would know it off by heart. But their hearts don't want to accept Jesus.

I wonder why?

One reason is that they would then have to admit they were wrong. They've spent all their lives proving that they are better than these low life tax collectors and prostitutes.

A prostitute is that ultimate symbol of unfaithfulness. The children of Israel in the Old Testament were often accused of acting like a prostitute. They were unfaithful to their God, selling themselves in worship of other god's expecting a better

profit margin, expecting a better return. The people who asked Jesus about his authority prided themselves on not selling out but having remained pure. They prided themselves on being better than those tax collectors and prostitutes, who for these people

Who can save their own life?

symbolised the worst in humanity. These people with their words and customs claim to be saying yes to God's call on their life. But like the first son in the story Jesus told, the one who said yes, but then didn't do what he was asked to do. They are like that son. They say yes to God, but then go off and do their own thing. They don't go and work in the Father's vineyard

but get about setting up their own vineyard.

In simple language, these people are doing what they do to get profit for themselves. Their motive isn't to work for free for God, devoting their time, money and possessions in thankful service to God. They act to be proven right, because that then makes them the right sort of person.

That's why they're not interested in Jesus or his authority because it exposes their motives as really being selfish. They're living to save their own lives, by their own actions. But Jesus doesn't treat them any better than those lousy tax collectors and prostitutes. Obviously Jesus doesn't know what he is talking about, because if the Messiah came he would associate with the right class of people, wouldn't he!

The tax collectors and prostitutes represent a group of people who know they're in trouble. They know they can't save themselves.

One reason tax collectors are so hated is because they have tried to save themselves by selling out their own country. These are Israelites who have gone to work for the enemy, the Roman occupying forces. Not only are they working for them, they're getting rich off their own people collecting taxes for Rome. They are traitors. Not only that, but because of the work they do and who they do it for, it means they are barred from ever worshipping in the temple. They're not only traitors, they've also sold their souls.

They've tried to save their own lives. They've financed the latest chariot. They have a wonderful mansion, fully paid.

They have their holiday villa and enough staff to maintain it all. But they have woken up feeling empty.

Then they heard John the Baptist and his message broke through to warm their hearts. John pointed to a lifestyle that doesn't leave you empty but

Jesus trusted his life in his Father's hands and lives

loved by God, forgiven by God, restored by God. And this, a gift of God. They heard John and repented. They gave up living to satiate their desires and starting living loved by God, seeking to love others, thankful for the new life they now have. A life that was full of God's purpose, God's worth, God's hope, God's love.

They're like the second son in Jesus story. The one who said; 'no I

won't go' but later went and worked in the Father's vineyard. He didn't go and do it his way, but joyfully went and did it the Father's way, reaping a harvest of joy and satisfaction.

Of course repentance isn't a one of action, it's a lifestyle. A lifestyle focused on Jesus, continually seeking to walk through life closely with him. Jesus goal is to share his life, his love, himself with us, with me, I'll gladly accept that invitation and seek to live life with Jesus, loving as he does, totally committed to sharing life with him.

The people who recognized that they weren't perfect and all outside themselves for help. John the Baptist pointed them to Jesus. Who just happens to be perfect and all powerful, but never lords it over us, but uses those character