

Jesus is King Week 3 - Message Outline

MAIN IDEA: God became one of us so we could become one with Him. // Jesus' authority was born from His identity and backed by His integrity.

TEACHING TEXT: Matthew 7:28-29 NIV, John 1:1-18 NIV

WHAT DO WE WANT STUDENTS TO KNOW? The authority of Jesus was born from His identity and backed by His integrity. He is more than a man. He is God in human form. And every word He said was an expression of the life He lived. He is grace and truth in the flesh. He is love in person. He was there at the beginning and He will be there when this world passes away. And through it all, He is inviting us to join our life to His.

WHAT DO WE WANT STUDENTS TO FEEL? Hopeful that the God of everything loves them so much He became one of us. Comforted by a God who empathizes with them, who knows what it is to be human and to experience suffering and disappointment. Inspired to trust that kind of God with their whole lives.

WHAT DO WE WANT STUDENTS TO DO? Trust in Jesus and follow Him with all they are.

TENSION: Why do we follow the people we follow? Why them instead of someone else? In a word, it's because they have: **Authority**. When your mama tells you to get up and go to school, you do because she has authority to make your life awesome or awful. When your teacher tells you to do your work if you want to pass, you do it because they have the authority to pass or fail you. When your coach tells you to run laps for being late, you do it because they have the authority to put you in the game or sit you on the bench. We follow the people we follow because of their authority. But, and this is really important, not everyone who has authority is actually worthy of it. Not everyone we follow is worth following!

For example, when I was a junior, I decided to follow the lead of one of my friends, and participate in creating the biggest traffic jam we could. So, with my friend in their car in one lane, and me in my car in the other lane, we drove side by side down a road with a 50 mph speed limit going, I kid you not, 10 mph. And our goal was to get as many cars stuck behind us as possible. Why did we do it? Because we were punks and only cared about ourselves. Why did I do it? **Because I would rather do something stupid with friends than do nothing all alone.**

Which, sadly, is the reason why so many people end up following people who aren't worth following. People who use their authority to cause harm instead of do good. So, perhaps, a better question to ask is, "what makes someone worth following?" Thankfully, we can learn the answer to that question by looking at Jesus, the greatest person, smartest human, and most influential leader the world has ever known, and see where His authority came from.

TRUTH: At the very end of His most famous sermon, after saying all that He had to say, we read in Matthew 7:28... **28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at**

his teaching, ²⁹ because **he taught as one who had authority**, and not as their teachers of the law. Matthew 7:28-29 NIV

Jesus was that special kind of person who carried Himself in a way that His authority was clear just based on what He had to say and how He said it. He didn't need an army at His back, or a whole bunch of fancy letters after His name. When He spoke, crowds of people sat in awestruck silence, and when He spoke, some people went even further, giving up their whole lives to follow Him. But, where does that authority come from? If you're taking notes, write this down:

Jesus' authority was born from His identity and backed by His integrity.

The authority of Jesus is born from His identity, it flows from who He is, and it's backed by His integrity, because there is no gap between the words He speaks and the life He lives. So, what we're going to do is take a closer look at the identity and the integrity of Jesus to see what makes Him, and Him alone, worthy of our full devotion. So, let's rewind to the very beginning of Matthew's Gospel, in the first chapter, where an angel comes to visit Joseph and tell him the true identity of the baby he is going to help raise. The angel says:

"Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name **Jesus**, because he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him **Immanuel**" (which means "**God with us**"). Matthew 1:20-23 NIV

Before Jesus was even born, His identity was clear. You may not know this, but the name Jesus quite literally means, "God saves." Why was He given this name? Because He, Jesus, the God who saves, will save His people from their sins! And, according to Matthew, all this took place to fulfill what God had spoken through a prophet hundreds of years ago. The virgin, Mary, miraculously by the power of the Holy Spirit, will become pregnant and give birth to a son who will be called Immanuel, which means God with us. Jesus' authority is born from His identity. Because unlike every other person in history, Jesus was more than just a human being. He is also God in the flesh. And this, right here, is what Christmas is all about. Celebrating the birth of Jesus, celebrating the event when God entered the world by becoming a human being. This is known as the Incarnation. Because, write this down: **God became one of us so we could become one with Him.**

Do you see it? The authority of Jesus is born from His identity as fully man and fully God! The God who did not simply shout His love from heaven, but showed His love in person by getting His hands dirty, walking on two legs, and sacrificing His very life so our sins could be forgiven and we could be adopted into His family.

Some of you, right now, are feeling far from God, like He's turned His back on you, that He's forgotten you, or, perhaps, that He was never even there to begin with. Hear me when I say this, God loves you, God sees you, and He knows you. What He did 2000 years ago on that first

Christmas wasn't an accident or a fluke. From the very beginning until now, God has been passionately pursuing His people, so don't you dare give up on Him because I promise you He has not given up on you. Keep showing up. Keep reaching out. Keep praying and asking for God to reveal Himself to you. And if you do, maybe not all at once or even in the way you want it, but I am so confident that He will. Because I've seen Him do it for me and for so many others.

Jesus' authority was born from His identity and backed by His integrity. The second part is really important. Because how many of you know, just because someone has a position of authority, does not mean they are a person of integrity? We have tragically been confronted with far too many examples of leaders, whether in government, business, or even the church, who talked the talk but did not walk the walk. And as a result, they ended up wreaking havoc on the people under their authority. Which is why, understandably, so many of us are pretty suspicious of *anyone* in a position of authority. Because our trust has been broken so many times, it almost feels foolish to try trusting again. But, thanks be to God that Jesus is not a normal human, like you or like me, who are so prone to corruption. A large part of what makes Jesus worth following is His integrity. It's the fact that He did *everything* He said He would do. He is good and true, through and through. There is no shadow side to Jesus. What you see is what you get and what you see is love personified. Here are just a few examples of what Jesus said in the SOTM that He lived out, even though it cost Him His life!

What He Said:	What He Did:
"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:10 NIV	"What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" Matthew 27:23 NIV
"You are the light of the world... they put (a lamp) on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house." Matthew 5:14-15 NIV	When they had crucified him... they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Matthew 27:35-37 NIV
"I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..." Matthew 5:44 NIV	"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Luke 23:34 NIV
"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Matthew 5:7 NIV	⁵⁴ ... the centurion and those with him... exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!" Matthew 27:54 NIV

Jesus' authority is born from His identity and backed by His integrity. He is worth following. Because He is the Son of God and Savior King who died and rose again to rescue us from sin. And He always keeps His promises. Before He ever asked you to do anything for Him, He already sacrificed Himself for you.

APPLICATION: So, what now? What do you do? How do you apply this message to your life? **Choose to believe in Him and become like Him.** Whether you're a Christian or not, this is what you were created for. This is the highest calling of your life. To believe in Jesus and become like Jesus so that you can love God and love others the same way Jesus does. Following Him really does change everything and there is no question that it is better than anything. So, what does it look like?

1. **Trust His authority.** It's not enough to simply acknowledge that Jesus existed, or that He was a cool spiritual dude who had good things to say, or even hold to the idea that He is the Son of God. Faith means trusting He is who He said He was, the true ruler of heaven and earth and submitting your life to His authority. For many of us, growing in this area comes from honestly processing your doubts and questions with people you trust.
2. **Know your identity.** We are who we are because of who He is. He is our King and we are His subjects. He is our Lord and we are His followers. He is the Creator and we are His Creation. And let me be clear, that does not make us less valuable, it makes us infinitely more valuable. Because we are connected to the One who holds the universe in His hands, and we have been handcrafted in His image by a Master Artist. That means we are works of art, brimming with potential, full of value, and deeply loved by our Maker. For some of you, it's time to remove the label you've let someone else, or even yourself, put on you and replace it with who Jesus says you are.
3. **Live with integrity.** Becoming like Jesus means becoming a person of integrity. Someone who doesn't just talk the talk, but actually walks the walk. Saying you follow someone, without actually going where they go is not following them. So, what do you need to do? You need to confess honestly when you fall short instead of covering up. And you need to repent, you need to do your best to actually do what Jesus asks you to do. And then you repeat the process. Confess. Repent. Repeat the process. When you do, you will see more clearly the goodness and kindness of your King, you will discover more and more who He says you are, and you will, little by little, day after day, become a person of integrity.

Jesus' authority is born from His identity and backed by His integrity. He became one of us so we could become one with Him. One of my favorite passages of Scripture, the opening of John's Gospel, which both inspired this message and the song, *Know Your Love*, that our worship team put together, captures this beautifully:

CONCLUSION: **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it... ¹⁴**The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.** We have seen his glory, **the glory of the one and only Son**, who came from the Father, **full of grace and truth.** John 1:1-5, 14 NIV