

How much authority does your voice have? Most of us, in fact probably all of us, don't have much authority in our voices. We cannot send tens of thousands of men into war. We cannot influence the livelihood of a company of 100,000 employees by either saying 'yes' or 'no' to one health plan or another.

Compared to Genesis chapter one and two, even those who think they have authority and power in this world have nothing. When God speaks, something happens. He carries it out by His spoken Word. "Let there be light,' and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). "And God said, ... and it was so." Here is raw power. Here is a voice that can actually perform what it says. It is not the smooth polished voice of the politician; this is the voice of God.

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18) Jesus says. Not some of it; not pieces of it; all the authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus. All the power of the Holy Trinity is directed through Jesus.

This authority entails all the authority on earth. The authority to make war and send soldiers to war; the authority to take the life of those destroying God's gift of life. The government, ordered under God, has been given authority from Jesus Christ Himself to be His agents on earth.

In the family Christ's authority is also present. Christ commands husbands to love your wives so you are willing to lay down your own lives for them; and gives to you the vocation of fatherhood to bring your children up in the ways of the Lord. By the same life-giving mouth with which the entire creation was created, Jesus' authority comes forth to order your family life here on earth.

Through Christ, the entire creation came into being. Father, Son and Holy Spirit were all present, creating the world. The Father, by His Son the living Word, speaks light and life to a formless void over which the Holy Spirit hovered. In a rare glimpse of an divine internal monologue, God says, "Let us make man in our image..." (Genesis 1:26) Christ, "The Word who was with God, and the Word who was God. All things were made through [Christ], and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:1, 3) The Son was present during creation, and now all the creative power of those days has been given to Him who died upon a cross.

Now, all authority on earth has been given to Him; all of creation follows the His orders. The power of the earth to shake violently causing upheaval and destruction, as in an earthquake, has been given to Christ. The power of earth to cover an entire city in water, as in a tsunami, flood or hurricane belongs to Christ. In fact, just as much as the power to destroy an entire city belongs to Jesus, so also the power to prevent a city from being destroyed belongs to Jesus. The power to create upheaval and to create stability in the economy belongs to Jesus. The power to create life or take life belongs to Jesus. All of this power and authority has been subjected to His Will.

Yet if all these things have been subjected to Christ's will, then why do they still happen? Our sin destroys the harmony and the rhythm of creation. It is a sour note, a random, chaotic noise, disturbing the order. The whole creation feels it and groans down to the smallest living creature. It is the foreign, alien word - the lie to Eve and to Adam - God is not true; you can be like God. We see the effects - destruction, devastation, decay, death. The earthquakes, the whirlwinds are the groanings of the creation waiting for our redemption, for the new creation, for our resurrection. We see the effects in our own lives - the brokenness, the hurt, the diseases, the suffering, the killing. The product of our sin is death and the corruption of the natural world. The question we should be asking is not why God has allowed these horrible things to happen, but rather why does God continue to allow sinners to live? The alien work of the Trinity is to bring destruction and death to show us our sinfulness and our need of a Savior. He uses even death and destruction to accomplish His will, to call sinners to repentance.

The Father loves His cosmos. He hates nothing He created. He shows His love for the cosmos by sending His eternal Son, the Word, in our flesh. The Word became flesh to redeem the world, to shed His blood on a cross, to die and rise, and in dying and rising to rescue all that He had made from decay and destruction.

We talk about "saving the earth." We didn't create it, and we can't save it. We can take care of it and be stewards of its resources but we can't save it. Jesus has, by His dying and rising. He has brought the new creation, by water and Spirit, in Baptism. He has poured out His Spirit on the face of this dying earth by the preaching of the Gospel, the good news of His atoning death and life in His resurrection.

In heaven, peace is made with the Father through Christ's death. The power and authority to forgive sins, the power and authority to give gifts of eternal value belongs to Christ; it is the greatest authority

which Christ possesses. No other greater power does He show, no other greater gift does He bestow than when He takes your transgressions from you and makes you righteous.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

Christ’s gifts given in His church are the greatest demonstration of authority and power which Christ gives. We all would like to see miracles of nature and miraculous events in our lives, but nothing compares to the glory and wonder when Christ baptizes, forgives and feeds. We would all like to see Jesus use His power and authority to grant us earthly blessings, which He does, but nothing compares to His voice which spoke the world into existence out of nothing, and now speaks life to sinners long dead.

The same work of creation which the Triune God did when He said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...” (Genesis 1:26), He also does when Christ says, “Go therefore and make disciples, baptizing them...and teaching them” (Matthew 28:19, 20). On the day of creation, God created dust and earth and water out of nothing. Then He took the dust, and made human life. He breathed life into that which was dead. “Go therefore and make disciples, baptizing them...and teaching them” means, go therefore and by the preaching of My Word, I will breath life into bodies of dust.

Our Lord has given you the breath of life, he has forgiven your sins, rescued from death and the devil and buried you with him in baptism and gives you the assurance of the resurrection. The love of the Father is here in the gifts which flow from the Son. They are yours, for He is with you always, to the end of the age.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.