

## **“Making a Messiah” / Exhibit B: His Unparalleled Words**

### **1: “But I say to you”**

**February 3, 2019**

**Key Texts:** *Matthew 5.21-48; Matthew 9.8; Matthew 11.27; Matthew 28.18*

**Key Words:** *Audacity, Blasphemy, Boss of me, Authority, Allegiance, Antitheses, But I say, Sermon on the Mount*

**Summary:** *Jesus claimed absolute authority over everything in heaven and on earth. In his teaching he claimed to supersede Moses, to have the right to countermand the law. If he was wrong, he would be a raving lunatic or a maniacal liar. If he was right ... Who do you say he is?*

*(Following the Bumper)* They thought Jesus was a blasphemer, because the kind of things he said were that audacious. But what if he was right? What if what he said was both unbelievably radical and completely right?

Okay, how many of you guys are pulling for the Saints today? Oh, that's right ... they are not playing. Did you know that down in New Orleans today they are having anti-Superbowl parties, and that most of the bars and restaurants down there will refuse to show today's game? If you're not a football fan, here's what happened. The Saints were playing the Rams – winner goes to the Superbowl. Less than 2 minutes left, the game is tied. If the Saints get the first down, or score a touchdown, they probably win, and they are in the Superbowl. Well, one of the Rams defensive backs pretty much blasts the Saints receiver before the ball gets there. That's called – pass interference. But the refs call nothing, so the Rams have to settle for a field-goal, and they end up losing the game. Some are calling it the worst blown call in NFL history,

Some of the memes that showed up afterwards are pretty funny!

- Look at this one: Some of the Saints fans are still sitting in front of their TVs like ...
- And here's Todd Gurley exchanging jerseys with the ref.
- Or, the Crystal Vision Center is offering free eye exams and glasses to any NFL ref, free of charge.
- Or, here's Darth Sidious' message to Saints fans: “Let the hate flow through you.”

- This one is my favorite: Sandra Bullock as one of the refs – “There is no flag for pass interference on the play.”

Bottom line, the refs had the right, they had the power but they didn't get it right. They had the right, they had the authority; but they didn't get it right! Hang on to that.

Anyway, how many of you guys are pulling for the Patriots today? ... And, how many of you guys are pulling for the Rams? ... You guys can stay. How many of you guys are just hoping for some good commercials? ... And how many of you guys don't give a rip? ... I suppose you can stay too. Maybe God will work a miracle in your hearts.

Anyway, let's tackle some way more important things. Any of you guys remember the show, Malcolm in the Middle? Almost 20 years old now. Well, here was their theme song: “Boss of Me,” by “They Might Be Giants.” It goes like this:

*Yes, no, maybe, I don't know  
Can you repeat the question?  
You're not the boss of me now  
You're not the boss of me now  
You're not the boss of me now  
And you're not so big*

And they just keep repeating those lines! Well, have you ever used that on anyone? “You're not the boss of me!” Or thought it, maybe? Anybody ever used that one on you? Maybe one of your kids ... right before you ... proved otherwise? Or how about one of these? Same attitude:

- “Says who?” You have to say that with sarcasm on steroids. “Says who?!”
- Or, “Who are you?” Again, sarcasm on steroids. “Who are you?!” That's kind of a clip version of “Who do you think you are?”
- Or, “What gives you the right?” Usually muttered against someone who probably does have the right.
- Or, “What makes your opinion any better than mine?” My favorite on that one was when I was a New Testament professor at the college. I had a Bible College Degree, and a Seminary degree, and a PhD in New Testament, and I'd been teaching Bible at the college several

years. And I was at a Junior High church camp, teaching a class, when this 7<sup>th</sup> grade girl said one of the dumbest things I'd ever heard. And I challenged her (I know, challenging a 7<sup>th</sup> grade girl is kind of stupid stupid). And she said, "What makes your opinion any better than mine." And all you can do it just kind of ... sigh.

- Or how about this one: "Who died and left you in charge?"
- Which is only just a little milder than, "Who made you God?"

How many of these have you heard ... aimed at you? Or how many of these have you used yourself? Be honest! Because ... how do you typically respond when someone pulls rank on you, or tries to tell you what to do? Is there this piece of you that kind of wants to push back? A little 'rebel' in you, maybe?

- Are you inclined to ignore them, unless they keep pushing on you?
- Or do you procrastinate? "I'll do what you tell me to do, but in my own time and in my own way."
- Or maybe you do it on the outside, but on the inside you're working up all kinds of anger. "I'll do it, but I won't like it ... and I won't like you!"
- Or maybe you just refuse. And you are so stubborn that it doesn't matter what they threaten or what they do. You just won't do it.

What I'm really asking is this: Fundamentally, do you respect authority? Would you consider yourself a person who respects authority? And some of you are like, "It depends! It depends on who they are! And it depends on whether I like them or not! And it depends on whether I agree with them or not!" Did you know that typically those who are older tend to respect authority more than those who are younger? Although, I guarantee you, not always! And did you know that those who are conservative tend to respect authority more than those who are liberal? Again, not always!

One more question before we really get going: Do you speed? I don't. I figure the speed limit is whatever speed I choose. But that doesn't work well with cops. Have you ever tried one of these on a cop? They pull you over, and you're like:

- "You're not the boss of me!" How would that work?
- Or, "Who are you ... What gives you the right ... ?" They might push back a little on you.

- Or, “I don’t think I was speeding! What makes your opinion any better than mine?”
- Or try this one on a cop: “Who died and left you in charge? Who made you God?” See how that works for you. By the way, we’re expanding our jail ministry here at CapCity.
- A friend of mine (who’s a cop) told me one time: “9 you’re fine, 10 you’re mine.” So next time you get pulled over, tell the cop your preacher said, “9 you’re fine, 10 you’re mine, and I was just going 8!” See how that works for you.

So why do we speed? And we’re thinking to ourselves, “Because these speed limits are stupid!” And, “I’m on a mission, and I need to get there faster! Those 2 minutes I’m saving might be life changing!” Or, “I’m being safe! The law is there to keep up safe, and I’m driving safely – fast but safe. So it’s okay!” Or is it that most of us have this piece inside us that just likes to bend the rules – I’m right there with you! We like to press the edges, to buck authority, to be a bit of a rebel. “You’re not the boss of me! Says who? What gives you the right? Who died and left you in charge of me? Who made you God?”

Which is why, I think, so many of them just kicked back at Jesus ... and why so many of us still do. We don’t kick back at what Jesus can do for us – we like that part. We do kick back at his claim to be our boss, to have absolute authority over us. We’re in a macro series we’re calling, “Making a Messiah.” Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, he claimed to be your Savior, and your Lord – which means, he thinks he has the right to be your boss, your master. Do you agree? Was he right?

Well, how are you going to decide? Who do you think Jesus is? And who are you going to listen to when it comes to making the single most important decision of your life? Last month we presented Exhibit A: his unparalleled power. His power over disease, over nature, over demons, even over death itself. We looked at his power through the Gospel of Mark. This month is about Exhibit B: his unparalleled words, the unparalleled authority he claimed for himself. Listen guys: Jesus’ miracles make us listen to him; his words force us to make a choice. What he will say is so outlandish, he’s either a raving lunatic, an insidious liar, or he is right! He is he really who he said he was. His miracles made them look; his words made some of them want to kill him. This month we’re going to

drill down on the way Jesus taught; and we'll be dipping into the Gospel of Matthew.

It kind of boils down to this: Jesus proved he had the might; but might doesn't make right. Jesus had power. Power gives you the ability to influence others and to control their actions – right or wrong. But was Jesus right? And did he have the right? Does he have the right to demand your unconditional allegiance? He claims that right! Is he right to do so? Actually it's going to boil down to this: Who do you think he is? Do you think Jesus really is who he claimed to be? And if he is ... the messiah, the Son of God, your Savior and your Lord ... how crazy would you have to be to blow him off? To live like he doesn't exist, or like he doesn't matter?

You see, Jesus said things, that if he's wrong, he's absolutely crazy, or flat-out evil. The way he spoke, the way he taught ... no sane man ever talked like Jesus did.

- The most famous sermon ever ... the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapters 5-7. When Jesus was done, here's what Matthew says (by the way, Matthew heard Jesus teach personally). Matthew says, "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with real authority—quite unlike their teachers of religious law." (Matthew 7.29) You know, guys like me. Bottom line, if I ever taught you like Jesus taught them, you'd blow me off as the most arrogant, blasphemous man ever.
- In chapter 11 Jesus says, "My Father (that's God; God Almighty; God himself) has entrusted everything to me. No one truly knows (me) the Son except (God) the Father, and no one truly knows (God) the Father except (me) the Son and those to whom (I) the Son chooses to reveal him." (11.27) Really?! What would you think if any other preacher said anything close to that? "God has entrusted everything to me ... Everything ... Even you! And you will never know God like I do. So if you want to know anything about God, you have to listen to me, you have to go through me!" If I said something like that this morning, would you be back next week? ... I hope not!
- And then Matthew closes his story of Jesus with these words, spoken by Jesus: "I have been given all authority (all authority) in heaven and on earth (is mine)." (28.18) "It's all under me! You are all under

me! I will have the last word on everything! Who made me the boss of you? ... God did!"

Big words! None bigger! ... What if Jesus really said this stuff? Do you believe he did, say these things? And what if ... What if he's right? What if what he claimed, what he said, is actually true? Do you accept them as God's truth for you?

Okay, we're going to kick off this study of Exhibit B with a look at some of Jesus words in what we call the Sermon on the Mount. (Don't worry; I'm already about half done this morning.) So if you have a Bible on your phone or tablet, find Matthew 5. If you don't have an e-Bible, I'd recommend the You Version. It's free and it's amazing. You can download it from your app store. And if you have one of those old-fashioned paper Bibles, it's in there too. And we leave the lights up in the corners to help you read. And ... the verses will be on screen as well.

We call it the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapters 5-7 – we're going to dive into the middle of it; because I want to laser in on what may be the most controversial part. You see, there was something about the way Jesus talked, about what he said. (7.28-29) He was different. And it wasn't just that he was good with words, it's that he said things no man – no man -- should ever say.

6 times ... We call these the "antitheses." 6 times Jesus flat out puts himself over Moses, over their law, over their Bible, even. Listen:

- Verse 21: "You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder'" Do you recognize that one: in the 10 commandments?" Then he's like: But I say ..."
- Verse 27: "You have heard the commandment that says, 'You must not commit adultery.'" Again – one of the big 10. And then here's Jesus: "But I say ..."
- Verse 31: "You have heard the law that says, 'A man can divorce his wife'" That's from their Bible." And Jesus is like: But I say ..."
- Verse 33: "You have also heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not break your vows'" They heard that because it was in their Bible. "But I say ...", Jesus says.

- Verse 38: “You have heard the law that says ... ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth’” Do you recognize that one? That’s Moses! “But I say ...” Jesus thought he could correct Moses!
- Verse 43: “You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’” Makes sense! “But I say ...”

Over and over: “You have heard that our ancestors were told...” “You have heard the commandment that says...” “You have heard the law that says...” “But I say!” Jesus thinks his words supersede Moses, the law, the Bible! And what’s wild is that Jesus doesn’t support his ... “arrogance” by citing authorities who agree with him. He just says, “But I say to you...” And what I say is bigger than Moses and his law, it’s bigger than your ... old covenant with God.”

Do you understand why Jesus made some of them killing mad? What gives him the right? Who died and left Jesus in charge? Who does he think he is? ... Well, who do you think he is? Can you imagine if Jesus actually said stuff like this?! How would you respond if you were there? I’m telling you: You’d either love him, or you’d hate him? But you would be no neutral.

“But I say to you.” And what comes next – what he says next blew their minds too.

- Verse 21: “You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder’ ... But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to God’s judgment.” Well, that’s not cool! Most of us have PhDs in anger! Do you buy what Jesus said?
- Verse 27: “You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery. But I say to you, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.’” Well, that not cool! Most of us have PhDs in lust! He’s setting an impossible standard, isn’t he?
- Verse 31: “You have heard the law that says, ‘A man can divorce his wife’ ... But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery.” Huh?!
- Verse 33: “You have also heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows’ ... But I say, “Don’t make any vows ... Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will; or No, I won’t, because anything beyond this is from the evil one.’” Really?! That’s really what he

said!? I swear it! Swear to God! Cross my heart and hope to die; stick a needle in my eye! I promise; I'd tell Jesus! And Jesus is like: if you just told the truth, you wouldn't need all that vowing!"

- Verse 38: "You have heard the law that says ... 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth' (Makes sense, that's fair!) ... But I say, do not resist an evil person. In fact, if he slaps you, turn the other cheek." Well ... that's just crazy, isn't it? You can't do life that way! That doesn't work!
- Verse 43: "You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' (We get that one too!) But I say ... I say, love your enemies ... and pray for those who persecute you (not at them, for them), because in that way you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven."
- Because ... because Verse 48: "You are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

And Jesus says this kind of stuff all the time. He takes the bar – the bar of Moses, the bar of the law, the bar of their Bible -- and he raises it impossibly high! I mean, if this is the way God wants us to be ... as pure on the inside as we try to be on the outside ... then none of us is good enough, are we? That would mean the only shot any of us have with God is ... .. grace. That's not cool!

Well ... what if Jesus actually said this stuff. Did he have the right to say things like this? And, was he right? Is Jesus actually speaking for God? Or maybe, is he actually speaking as God? And in a week or two we'll discover the consequences if he blow him off as wrong, when he really was right. The stakes, guys, are incredibly high, infinitely high.

So ... how do you respond to the authority Jesus claimed for himself?

- Are you inclined to ignore him, unless the nagging of God's Spirit finally wears you down?
- Or do you procrastinate? "I'll do what Jesus wants, eventually ... in my own time and in my own way."
- Or maybe you'll do it his way on the outside, but inside you're as rebellious as hell. "I'll obey him, but I won't like it ... and sometimes I don't like him ... much!"
- Or maybe you just refuse. You know he claims to be your Savior and your Lord, but you'll not bend your knees! Or you might even tell

people he is your Savior and your Lord; but you don't live that way. You don't think it's about doing life with God, for God, God's way; you think God should be doing life with you, for you, backing your way.

And, think about those things we throw at each other, and picture using them against Jesus ... against God.

- "Says who? Jesus!" And perhaps, perhaps he smiles ... for a while.
- "You're not the boss of me, Jesus!" We actually do use that one whenever we know what he wants, and because it clashes with what we want, and we choose what we want rather than what he wants.
- "Who gives you the right?" "Who give you the right, Jesus, to tell me what to do?!" And he's like, well, "All authority in heaven and on earth – over everything, over everyone, over you" has been given to me by my Father, by God." Well, what if Jesus was right?
- Or how about, "What makes your opinion any better than mine, Jesus?" That one is just flat out funny, isn't it? What makes you smarter than me, or wiser me ... God?" Say that with a straight face!
- Or, "Who died and left you in charge, Jesus?" And Jesus is like ... Well ... I did.
- Or, "Who made you God, Jesus?" And sometimes I think God has to have a sense of humor. Because if he didn't we'd all be toast.

Bottom line, guys – this is 'rubber hits the road' stuff – Who do you think Jesus is? A raving lunatic – kind of the craziest man ever? A maniacal liar – maybe the most dangerous liar ever? Or is he really your Savior and your Lord? And if Jesus really said this stuff, there are really no other viable options, are there? He's a liar, a lunatic, or your Lord. And here is the bigger question. You see, the big question is not, "Who do you think he is?" The big question is: "Who does God the Father think he is?" And I'm telling you guys, if God really did raise Jesus from the dead, I think that's pretty solid evidence who God thinks he is.

Here are the closing words of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus says, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who (actually) does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' "Therefore everyone who hears these

words of mine and puts them into practice (puts them into practice) is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching (no kidding!), because he taught as one who had authority (no kidding), and not as their teachers of the law. (7.21-29)

So ... who do you say he is? And are you willing to back it up with your actions as well as your words? ... .. Guys, we are here this morning to worship God the Father, and God the Son, through God the Spirit. Did you know that the heart of worship is telling God – “Jesus is not only my Savior, he’s my Lord!”

In fact, some of what we do physically in worship is supposed to symbolize our acceptance of Jesus as our Lord. We bow our heads ... as a sign of our submission to him. We raise our hands – it’s a symbol of surrender. Have you ever done this? We put our hands in front and form two fists; and then we turn our hands over and we open them. We take what we think is ours, and we give it all back to him. It’s an act of surrender. In the Bible sometimes the people of God would fall on their faces in abject surrender. But we’ve got this cement floor, and our chairs are so close together we don’t have much room. But they would also kneel. So sometimes we do that too. So I’m going to invite you to pray with me. If you are willing, bow your heads – an act of surrender. If you want, raise your hands in an act of surrender. If you want, and it won’t damage you, go to your knees before him... even though it will hurt a little.

Listen, if you are not a Jesus follower yet, maybe you should try it too. Maybe you should start doing life with God, for God, God’s way right now. He deserves that; and you need it. I’m going to speak for us to God, using the Radicalis Declaration as our template. The prayer will be on screen as well. Let’s pray ...

Today we are stepping across the line. We’re tired of waffling and wavering. We’ve made our choice, and our decision is irrevocable. We’re

going your way, God. We want to do life with you, for you, your way. There is no turning back. We will live the rest of our lives serving your purposes, for your glory. We will celebrate your presence, cultivate your character, build up your family, live out your love, and do whatever we can to communicate your truth and your grace.

Since our pasts have been forgiven, and we have a purpose for living, and a home waiting in heaven, we refuse to waste any more time or energy on shallow living, petty thinking, trivial talking, thoughtless doing, useless regretting, hurtful resenting, or faithless worrying. Instead we will magnify you, God, we will do what we can to grow to full maturity as Jesus followers, and to serve those you love.

Because this life is preparation for the next, we will value worship over wealth, “we” over “me”, character over comfort, service over status, and people over possessions, position, and pleasure. We will do the best we can with what we have for Jesus Christ today. We won’t be captivated by culture, manipulated by critics, motivated by praise, frustrated by problems, debilitated by temptation, or intimidated by the devil.

Instead we’ll keep running the race with our eyes on the goal; not on the sidelines or on those running by me. When times get tough and I get tired, we won’t back up, back off, back down, back out, or backslide. We’ll just keep moving forward by your grace. And we won’t quit until we finish the race.

We commit to being gracious to everyone, grateful for every day, and generous with everything that God entrusts to me. We hereby declare our allegiance to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We say this: However, whenever, wherever, and whatever you ask me to do, my answer is yes! I’m ready. Anytime. Anyway. Whatever it takes! We want to be used by you in such a way that on that final day we’ll hear you say, “Well done, good and faithful servants.” ... .. Amen.

*Steve ...*

If you are a Jesus follower ... make it more than words.  
If you have been a marginal Jesus follower ... make it more than words.  
If you haven't been a Jesus follower, and you prayed this prayer with me,  
and you meant it, we need to talk. Don't back off, don't back out ... let's  
get it started!