



Grain

“It’s not humanity that creates communities; it’s our communities that make us human.” Yohana Junker

Submitted by Vernita Kennen, Roseville, Minnesota

Field

²³When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ ²⁶But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. Matthew 21:23-27

Thoughts written by Rev. James Lynch, Town of Dunn, WI

Authority can be a tricky thing. Where authority comes from, maybe even trickier. We are living in a time where authority and the source of it is questioned almost 24 hours a day.

It’s no longer enough to have education on, experience about, familiarity with a given topic – medicine, science, teaching climate change, hunger, etc. – to be considered an authority. You have to also agree with the prevailing cultural winds. Otherwise, you will be dismissed and vilified. Ask Anthony Fauci, for one.

It’s no longer sufficient to get enough votes to be elected to a particular office in the executive, legislative, or judicial branch of government, which gives you a certain authority. The right people have to agree that you should be allowed to retain that office, otherwise, they will go to great lengths to get you out of that office. Just look at the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

When the chief priests and elders ask Jesus about where he gets the authority to teach as he does, it is not an out of line question. It really isn’t. Except for the motive behind it. It is not designed to gather information, to learn something new, but to clear away something they see as a threat to their standing with the community. Jesus’ authority is a challenge to their own.

We witnessed expert medical authorities a challenged by those who would for their own gain deny the science around Covid-19. Authority is a challenge to those who seek to keep a tight stranglehold on an important part of the electoral process and the shape of political power in the state.

Jesus had a way of dealing with those who questioned his authority. He kept the pressure on them. He gave them a question they were afraid to answer. So, they withdrew.

Those who question legitimate authority and what they and others like them represent won’t withdraw or alter easily. Even when they feel the pressure. That doesn’t mean the pressure should stop. Advocacy for the right way needs to continue. Happy Monday!

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Many blessings upon you,
Pastor Jim