**Thesis:** If you’ve ever heard someone captivate a room with a speech, you know a fraction of what the people of Jesus’ time meant when they said he spoke as one with authority. As the Word of God, Jesus’ words struck the hearts and minds of his listeners with striking power and weight. Today, we have the privilege of having God’s word available to us at any given moment. If we come to him in faith, the possibilities of what he might do in our lives is endless.

**Introduction:** This is the Jesus Podcast, a year of stories showcasing the depth of Christ’s love and the glory of God’s truth. I’m \_\_\_\_ your host from Pray.com. It’s great to have you hear with us for another marvelous miracle of the Messiah. Be sure to follow the podcast so you don’t miss out on all of Jesus’ exciting adventures.

**Context:** As the Jews awaited for their Messiah, they had come to long for one who would break them free from the oppression of the Roman Empire. They longed to be free of the rule of Cesar and hail their own king that would establish Israel as a great nation. What they found in Jesus defied their every expectation. The humble carpenter from Nazarath, who blended in with the crowds. But just because Jesus didn’t stand out in his earthly appearance, the ministry, messages, and miracles he brought demonstrated he was one who held the greatest of authority given to him from the Father in heaven. In today’s miracle, we’ll see a juxtaposition between earthly and heavenly authority as a Roman centurion, one with the authority to command one hundred soldiers, seeks out the one man he believed had an even greater authority than himself. As we learn about another miracle, we’ll discover how our faith in God will always prove to be a better option than holding on to faith in anything of this world.

**Message:** Whether we’ve been in a place of authority or have had to submit to someone who was, we’ve likely had our share of good experiences and bad. From parents, to teachers, to bosses, authority is a natural part of many areas of our life. For the Jews during Jesus’ time, authority was a touchy subject. After the Roman Empire’s expansion to include the Israelites, authority was most often associated with oppression and subjugation to unfair rule. This is why it seems startling that a Roman centurion, a commander who had authority over one hundred Roman soldiers, would make himself subject to a Jewish rabbi. However, while many came to Jesus for healing out of desperation or to marvel at his miracles, the Roman centurion came with a much different heart. After he makes his request known to Jesus, the Lord notes him as being a man of faith. His faith in the miraculous powers of the Messiah ran so deep that even Jesus was moved by the centurion’s words.

We read this in *Matthew 8:10 “When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, ‘Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.’”*

How could a man with no Jewish background or upbringing have such a profound faith in Jesus? It began by recognizing Jesus’ authority. As a man of authority himself, the centurion understood that the works Jesus was doing commanded more than just fellow man. Jesus was commanding creation itself. By just his words, the teacher from Nazareth could give sight to the blind, heal the lame, and reverse the effects of diseases. **The authority of Jesus was simply different.**

What made Jesus’ authority different from any one else’s is the source. His authority didn’t come from any earthly kingdoms or powers. It was not bestowed upon him from mankind. His authority came directly from heaven from the Father.

As Jesus is praying in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night he would be betrayed by one of his own followers, he prays this in *John 17:1 “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.”*

Having this type of authority meant that not only did Jesus have the right to rule, but he was empowered to do so in such a way that would glorify the Father in heaven. The magnitude of Jesus’ rule is unprecedented. But not only that, it means the nature of his authority is as well.

Maybe you think about authority and think about someone having the power to make others do what they want. Sometimes this comes with force or severe consequences for those who don’t listen. But this isn’t how Jesus exercised his authority during his earthly ministry. Jesus’ authority was always used for the good of people. We have plenty of reasons to question people of authority in this world as we learn about leaders who used it for personal gain or at the detriment of others. Perhaps we even have concerns about people in authority today. But we never have to worry about that with Jesus. The nature of his authority is not to dominate over people for his own personal gain. This is because Jesus’ authority is meant to be used to accomplish the good plan of the Father. Which means that it will always be for the good of those who submit themselves to his rule. The use of Jesus’ authority flows from his compassion for people and is always seen as being used to love others and protect them from the corruption of this world. This means that we should never be worried about submitting ourselves to him, wondering if he’ll abuse our submission. His authority means we can live in the safety, security, and care of the king of a better kingdom.

At least in the small ways he could understand without knowing the centuries of prophecies about the Messiah and centuries of teachings on the goodness of God, this is the knowledge that the centurion came with when he sought out Jesus to ask for healing for his servant. He knew that Jesus’ authority was distinct. It was different from his in every way. And from what he could perceive, it was limitless. This left the centurion feeling unworthy to even have Jesus in his home. But this also opened his mind to believe that Jesus could do anything with his authority, including heal his servant from a distance at just a word.

We should view Jesus’ authority with the same sense of awe. The worst thing we can do is put limits on Jesus’ authority by telling ourselves he’s incapable of something. While we should never demand Jesus to do something specific for us, we should never fall prey to the thought that there’s something he can’t do. We should never put Jesus in a box that only contains our expectations or understanding. A good way to test if we’re putting Jesus in a box is by reflecting on our prayer life. Are the requests we make only the ones we consider to be reasonable, or are we willing to bring even the most unbelievable requests to the God who can do anything? Ask God big things and expect him to do something radical in response. Jesus is bigger than any box we could create for him.

And to prove this to us, Jesus did something incredible before he ascended into heaven after he rose from the dead. After spending forty days with the disciples after the resurrection, he gives his disciples the Great Commission.

*We read it in Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

We should note that Jesus alludes first to his own authority over all of heaven and earth. But his intent wasn’t to simply remind them of his power. It was to explain to them why they were equipped for the work ahead. Jesus was sending out the disciples, and by extension, us as his disciples today, with his authority to go and make disciples of all nations through the power of the Spirit. In a very real way, Jesus shares his authority with us. But like he demonstrated in his ministry, this authority is not meant to be used to overpower people. This authority is meant to give us confidence in continuing the work of Jesus to accomplish the will of the Father. It’s meant to send us out with the same heart of compassion that he had. To preach the word of God with full belief. To help those in need with joy. To make disciples who love God above all else and love their neighbors as themselves. To glorify God in heaven.

While we may see the ups and downs of earthly authority, Christ’s heavenly authority is something to celebrate. We can find peace in knowing Jesus is in full control from the throne room of heaven. We can find strength in knowing our king is in his rightful place and is ruling us with his good right hand. We can find hope in knowing that his kingdom is growing and that one day, when he comes back to make a new heaven and earth, we get to be his citizens forever.