

THE BIG IDEA: Our authority from God is never dependent on our popularity with men.

The Take-Off

Let's play a little word association, okay? I'm going to say a phrase that has become quite common around the region over the last few months, and you see what's the first thing that pops in your mind.

Are you ready? "Bandwagon."

Now, the actual term bandwagon came from a time when a wagon was used to carry around a band, but now it more commonly refers to: "a particular activity or cause that has suddenly become fashionable or popular."

Sports is where we see it the most often, and this season, we see it the most with the Panthers. It's suddenly "in" to be a fan of the Cats, and that means the bandwagon is getting crowded.

But it's not new. It happened a couple seasons ago when the Seattle Seahawks got popular.

[IMAGE - bandwagon-seahawks]

Of course, with the run the Panthers have had this season, some of those bandwagon fans have joined a new bandwagon.

[IMAGE - bandwagon-panthers]

And once the game is over tonight, there will be more fans jumping on the winning team's bandwagon!

[IMAGE - bandwagon-fans]

Fortunately, I found the perfect jersey for the bandwagon fan.

[IMAGE - bandwagon-jersey]

Admittedly, not everyone here is into sports, but bandwagoning (if that's a word) isn't limited to sports: music, movies, trends, fads can all lead to crowded bandwagons.

Even in the church, where people jump on the bandwagon of the latest hot podcast preacher or doctrinal teaching.

I say all of that because at the end of Luke 4, bandwagon fans make their appearance in Luke's story, and they're going to be around all the way until the end when - SPOILER ALERT - they turn on Jesus and kill him.

Typical of bandwagon fans, isn't it?

We'll be reading Luke 4:31-44.

1. Don't confuse man's power with God's authority.

- a. It only took 2 verses to reach the key verse and the key theme of these passages.
- b. Verse 12 says that "they were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority."
- c. Since authority is the major theme of this section of Scripture, we need to know what it is, especially since it is so often confused with power.
- d. Cop stops a car with authority, not with power, right?
 - POWER is taken; AUTHORITY is received
 - POWER is based on who has it; AUTHORITY is based on who gives it
 - POWER intimidates; AUTHORITY empowers
 - POWER is loud; AUTHORITY silences
- e. See how different they are? Many with power actually have no real authority, and some of the most authoritative voices actually hold no power.
- f. Now we know what authority is (and isn't), so let's see if we have it.
 - Psalm 8:6 - we rule over the works of God's hands
 - Luke 10:19 and 2 Corinthians 10:8 - Jesus gave us authority for growing the kingdom
- g. Whether or not we're using this authority correctly is something we'll explore momentarily, but for now, let's at least agree that Jesus didn't give us a charge to make disciples of all nations without also giving us HIS authority to do it.
- h. It's not based on our power, but on his authority given to us by the Helper, the Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:6)
- i. So, authority and power are very different, and followers of Jesus have the authority of Jesus to live out the mission of Jesus
- j. Let's learn about authority

2. Authority ALWAYS attracts.

- a. We're not going to go into a ton of detail here, but I want you to see that people are attracted to authority
- b. Sometimes, authority attracts what we may not expect or even want

- c. Jesus' authority attracted a demon possessed man (Luke 4:33)
 - I think it's funny that, in the Bible, demons are more bold about declaring the Lordship of Jesus than many in our churches today!
 - Jesus told the demon to be quiet because he knew that those around him would confuse authority with power and it wasn't time for that showdown yet
- d. Jesus' authority didn't just attract demons, but people, too (Luke 4:40, 42)
 - These are the first bandwagon fans of Jesus' ministry
 - The crowd that appeared at Simon's mother-in-law's house came from the news spread in verse 37
- e. The attraction quality of authority is real, and it actually leads us to the biggest danger with authority

3. Authority MAY corrupt

- a. Twice - in verse 32 and in verse 36 - we see the people's response to Jesus' authority: amazement.
- b. The word literally means "struck out of their senses!"
- c. The reason they saw a difference in Jesus' authority is b/c they'd seen the opposite
- d. The religious leaders of their day had traded God's authority for their own power
- e. This is something that we must always be on guard against: the temptation to give up authority for power
- f. If we do, we'll find the authority we should have had watered down and corrupted like theirs was

4. Authority SHOULD serve

- a. You know what keeps us from trading authority for power? Using God's authority to serve.
- b. In fact, true authority WILL serve, and we see this in these scriptures.
- c. The first man isn't injured when the demon leaves because he isn't a pawn in a power struggle
- d. How many times have people been hurt in churches by the shrapnel of a power fight?
- e. After the showdown in the synagogue, Jesus served Simon's mother-in-law when asked (v. 38)
- f. At the end of his very long day, he served the crowd that came after sunset - every single one (v. 40)
- g. Then, after a short night's sleep, he's ambushed during early morning prayer about staying - the bandwagon was getting really full and his poll numbers were rising - and he said no because he wasn't sent for that
- h. He was sent to preach the good news everywhere and to serve everyone
- i. Trust me, all of us will have opportunity to stop serving - to sit back and be served - but that's not what God's authority is for.
- j. Thinks of it this way: Followers of Jesus have the authority of Jesus to do the works of Jesus
- k. In fact, John 14:12 says we'll do even GREATER works because of his authority in us through the H.S.

The Landing

Here's why this authority thing is so important: it keeps us from being bandwagon fans, because OUR AUTHORITY FROM GOD IS NEVER DEPENDENT ON OUR POPULARITY WITH MEN.

Chasing power and popularity will make us bandwagon fans, and the reason we can't be is because after Jesus had his first encounter with the bandwagon fans, he still hadn't found the men who would be his disciples and eventually change the world.

It's because true followers of Jesus are rarely found among the bandwagon fans.

But when we understand the authority that we have from Jesus, we don't need to be, because authority isn't based on popularity with men, but on identity with Christ.

Let's pray.