



Text: Matthew 21:23-32

Dear Friends in Christ,

Firstly let me say welcome to you Neo. Welcome into God's family. What a joy it is to witness a baptism. For each of you to be reminded of your own baptism or perhaps if you are not baptised to gain an insight into the power and authority of God through His only Son Jesus by the power of His spirit. Today Neo's name has

been written in the book of eternal life. Today by the power and authority of God, Neo's sins have been washed away and he has become a child of God. Today Neo has been sealed by the power of God through the gift of His spirit so Neo now is set apart and made Holy by God to do the things of God all the while not needing to be perfect rather being perfected by Jesus along the way. A journey where he needs your prayers and encouragement, and your voice of action as he grows into the young man God has made Him through Jesus.

So do you have a loud voice? Or is your voice quiet? Do you feel that sometimes you are doing a lot of talking but no one seems to listen? When it comes to sharing Jesus' love with others just by telling someone about

Jesus doesn't always seem to get through especially when actions don't seem to follow the words spoken.

How loud are your actions? You see I wear a collar and I preach the gospel of Jesus. I administer the sacrament of the Lord's supper and also the wonderful gift of Baptism. But the greatest sermon I will ever preach is the same powerful sermon you will preach - sharing Jesus in action to each other and to the world.

See Jesus sends us all out into the world. You and me, everyone who is called to follow Jesus is sent in the follow of the Lord. The sermon you preach loudest is not in word but in action. Love is not just a word but it is living. Love is living and active. And when people see

in us nothing more than words of religion and no action they do not meet Jesus. They don't hear of His great love for them, for there are no actions. Sometimes the only actions they get beyond words are actions that hurt others through judgement through rules. They get words of hypocrisy where the words spoken are about how Christian forgive yet the actions are not actions of forgiveness. You see Jesus doesn't do fake like many Christian people do.

In our churches and even in our Christian schools so often we market what we are, yet we rarely live what we say. Instead of living out Jesus great love for the world we talk, tell people we go to church and then deny Jesus by our actions. We exclude instead of welcome.

We gossip instead of buildup. We complain instead of forgive. We hate because someone doesn't fit our mold instead of love, which changes everything.

You may have heard people say that love, oh that Christian love is just all about being warm and fuzzy. I would say yes see how warm and fuzzy this is, love cost God His only Son, who came into the world to suffer and die for the sin of the world. For your sin and my sin. So love is powerful and life changing. Living Jesus love is not about living perfect, it is living real. It is speaking the truth in love to others. It is repenting and seeking forgiveness and forgiving each other, this sisters and brothers is Jesus love lived out.

Jesus' authority is questioned in our reading today by the religious powerbrokers of the time.

Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?" Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John's baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?" They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human

origin'—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.”

So they answered Jesus, “We don't know.”

Then he said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

This love, God's love poured out through His only Son Jesus without reservation but freely for the sin of the world is powerful. This power, Jesus is power to heal and make new and reconcile. This power to forgive sin and to give us eternal life all who believe and receive. This power is not of our world when we think of the power we see, power that divides and destroys and self serves and is violent.

The power of God in Jesus today has changed the life of Neo forever. This same power today is making you new again in your hearing of the truth, your sins are forgiven. You friends because you have heard the truth, Jesus Himself speaking to you, your sins are forgiven, you are set free from sin, death and the power of the devil. You are a new creation now sent out to live, notice not say, but live Jesus love and truth in all you do. Not so God loves you more, but because He loves you already. You have seen salvation today in baptism. You again today are reminded of your own baptism that you are a child of God.

You see Jesus' authority was challenged but Jesus doesn't go toe to toe fighting these religious officials. He

doesn't need to because He lives out what He speaks. He stills a storm, He changes water into wine, He raises the dead, He heals the sick, He gives sight to the blind but above all He dies on the cross and rises from the dead, doing what He said. Being obedient unto death on the cross to save all people from their sin.

“What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’

“I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. “Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go. “Which of the two did what his father wanted?”

“The first,” they answered.

This is about doing, about living not speaking and the doing comes from believing. For in believing we receive all God gives in Jesus, eternal life, salvation and forgiveness. Neo today has received this as a gift for God has created faith in Him by His spirit.

Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

So sisters and brothers. The righteous, Neo and you and me in faith have been made right with God and are clothed with the righteousness of Jesus. The righteous shall live by faith, not by words but by actions that come out of our faith in Jesus.

We don't need to market Jesus to try to convince others of His love or to try to convince ourselves that we are doing the God stuff. Let us live it out by our faith in the one who gave it all Jesus. If you have a grievance with another how will you speak to that person? With words or with action of forgiveness and repentance?

The best thing sisters and brothers in all this challenge of living out in action the truth of Christ in all we do is

that He fills us with His spirit, the Holy Spirit to help us and the sweetest word in action you will ever hear is when you get it wrong, when you use only words and then your actions hurt and do not match the word, it is Jesus action on the cross that cries out to you and me and to the world your sins are forgiven. God's love in Jesus declares you forgiven and free from sin over and over again because Jesus didn't just speak about what He could do in love, He did it for you. Amen. The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen