



Thrones
Leveraging Authority to Help Others Win
Part 10 – When You Serve, We Win
Pastor Ted Cunningham

We are in part 422 of the Throne series that we started a few years ago... No, we're in Part 10 and we have one more Sunday, next Sunday, with Part 11. But, we've been talking about leveraging authority to help others win. Week one, we asked the question: "What do you do when you find you're the most powerful person in the room?" That can be a spouse, that can be a parent, that can be an employer, that can be the boss, that can be someone among friends. What do you do with that type of power and that type of authority? We're talking about not asserting authority, but leveraging authority well.

Today, we're looking at the idea of *When You Serve, We Win*. This is parents and this is spouses. When one spouse chooses to win and another spouse chooses to win, what happens? You tend to have conflict, disputes, arguing, and fighting. But, when one spouse chooses to serve, you can go the distance and you can have a great marriage.

That's actually how we want to start this morning off. We're going to take a walk out into the crowd because we are going to celebrate something today. I'm going to ask Norma and Gene Husted to stand. This week, they are celebrating 70 years of marriage. This is from your church family. You don't have to open it now; you can open it later. And these flowers. Gene, this is your opportunity. Gene considers himself a backrow Baptist. That's what he often says.

Joshua, don't go anywhere, because you are a newlywed. This man has been married 70 years. Gene, just share with the newlywed. What does he need to know to go 70 years in marriage? Don't die; I know that's the first one.

Gene: Well you just trust the Lord to take you; that's the main thing.

Ted: And then you give your mic to Norma when she asks for it.

Gene: We've had a lot of lovely, great years. A few silent ones, but mostly great.

Ted: Norma, you share with the newlywed.

Norma: It's wrong to give me the microphone. Well, the first thing, we met (shut your ears) at the Baptist church. And you know Ted always pours it on us because we met at the Baptist church, but that was in 1942. Think back. Half of you weren't even born yet, right? He was in the Navy in World War II

for five years.

Ted: Let's hear it for Gene.

Norma: We would have probably been married 75 years if he hadn't gone to the Navy. I tell you, it was great when it first started, but then after you start having family and things happening, you can't be compatible all the time. I think everybody... If you say that you've never had an argument or never fussed, you're lying. You know, we have our ups and downs and our valleys and our mountains, but I think it was the Lord that really kept us together. And if we hadn't had him, we wouldn't still be here. Believe me, we wouldn't still be here.

Ted: Let's hear it for Norma and Gene and 70 years of marriage. How many think that was enough of a sermon right there? I think that was good.

Today, we are going to be looking at the Last Supper and that's the context of this lesson that we are going to see. But, it's a little bit different of a morning because we want to prepare ourselves to take the Lord's Supper together as a family. We will also to prepare ourselves for Easter in two weeks and to really be considering and thinking through what's going on in our relationships, what's going on in our heart, and how we move forward. What Jesus is going to deal with today... When we talk about authority and we talk about leadership is he's going to basically say, "Don't do it like the world. The world's idea is when you reach a certain level of leadership..." I'm looking at some seasoned veterans in the room, some seasoned folks in business that the goal is to get to a place in leadership where you don't have to do a lot of work, you don't have to serve; you have people serving you instead. Jesus says, "No, that is not at all what the church is supposed to be."

Leadership is not about perks, privileges, promotions, and power. That's not why we pursue leadership. That's not what we do with the authority that's been given to us. If we have expertise in an area or we've started a company or you're the leader of your family, you don't have that and you don't have children for the purpose of serving you. You're there to leverage that authority to help others win.

When it comes to the church, here's what we are looking for: **We want servant leaders, not servants and leaders.** The goal here is not to divide folks out and say we've got super, elite Christians that have been in the church for a long time and now we've got new believers and so, it's your job to serve those... That's not the church. Church is the longer you've been here, the more you should be serving. We talked about this a few weeks ago. If you've been here for some time, it's not the amount of time you've been at a church, it's not the amount of money you've given to a church that you begin to say, "I believe now I should have more of a voice with the way things go down around here." That is not what we do with the authority that we've been given.

Today, we are going to be Luke 22 and Matthew 26. If you want to find both of those places. If you're brand new to studying the Bible, I just want to give you this little illustration to maybe help you figure out why the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – we call those the gospels – tell of events, but they have different pictures of the events. Like the subject of the Last Supper in John, we call it the Upper Room Discourse; it's long.

There are shorter versions of it in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Why do we go into so much detail? To me, it's kind of like reading the newspaper. Obviously, we are talking about God's Word and the infallible Word of God; it's not a newspaper. But, let's say the idea of finding out about the Oregon/UNC game. I pick up USA Today, The New York Times (President Trump's favorite), the Springfield News Leader. I pick up four different papers and I'm going to read about that event. They are all going to share the same details. The score, where it was played; all of that will be in there, but there will be a little bit different perspective on the game through each one. It doesn't mean that the one who shared 1,500 words is more correct than the one who shared 750 words. That's not the idea. So, we're going to go back and forth because each one of the writers gives us a little bit more detail about where we're at. So, we're going to look at leadership and authority in the context of the Last Supper and, ultimately for us today, the Lord's Supper.

Let's jump into Luke 22. **14 When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table.** Reclined is one of my favorite biblical words. **15 And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.** The Passover is speaking there of Hebrew children and the Passover and their freedom out of Egypt and the celebration. **16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."** What he is saying is "This is our last meal together, but just for now."

I had the opportunity with Amy's grandfather when he was passing away and on the day of his death and with many others throughout our church family to take the Lord's Supper with them on the day of their death. It's a very special moment. I always get choked up around that moment because I realize this is it upon this earth, but this is not our last time together.

Jesus is explaining this to the guys. You have to understand we have the blessing of reading this story after the cross and after the resurrection. In the church age, we are able to put all of the last meal into context. There is so much confusion and distraction and sadness among the disciples as Jesus announces this to them. We go on and we see some of the issues at hand during the Last Supper. But, when we study this, what we understand is we're here, we're the church, and when we take the Lord's Supper, as Jesus just proclaimed, we're looking back on the cross of Jesus and we're looking forward to his return. That's what we're doing today as we end our service.

We'll jump into this in Matthew 26. **20 When evening came...** You see it's a little bit different wording. **...Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. 21 And while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me."** The scripture kind of lays out the emotion of the night. **22 They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?"** The Lord has just proclaimed, "This is the last meal and one of you will betray me."

There is sadness and I just want to ask you for a second because as I was studying it this week. I asked my kids... We were sitting at a mall at the food court at about 8:00 at night. I said, "Hey kids, what if this was our last meal together." I think it's a great question for parents to ask. I think you should ask it right after there has been conflict or a fight. You wouldn't think... If this is our last meal, are we going to be bickering? "If you knew this was your dad's last meal upon this Earth with you, what would you do? Who would you invite and what would we talk about?"

Carson has no problem discussing it. My 13-year-old immediately says, "Stop, Dad. I don't want to do it." My daughter doesn't like talking about death.

I talk about death almost every day; it's part of the job of being a pastor. You're either being with someone on their deathbed or you're preparing someone for their death, if you know what I'm talking about. I'm thinking about death a lot and I think about my death a lot. Why? I don't fear it; I'm not looking for it; I'm not going out trying to find it, but I want to have the conversation. What would we talk about? So, we start talking about memories. The idea of it being a last meal completely changed the tone of the meal. I know we would talk about memories and all the things we did together as a family, but I take from the words and the life of Jesus that he begins giving them instructions. I would feel there's a lot we have to get done at this meal. Some of this stuff, I've already said. Some of this stuff I've already shared with you, but now I'm going to really give it to you and then Jesus really goes in to teaching them.

Now look what happens. We just told you it's the last meal. Jesus is saying, "I told you that one of you will betray me" and then watch this when you go back over to Luke 22. **24 A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.** This is where Jesus give us our lesson for the morning. **25 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them..."** We talked about this last week. They assert their authority. They get to a place where they want to be served, they want to be taken care of. **"...and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors."** So, there is a hierarchy of leadership.

If you're brand new to the church and you've heard about the church and maybe you've been in the church growing up, you think that's how it's supposed to be. You have the leaders, you have the pastor, then you have deacons and all of this and then all the members and all of that. Listen, in your head, you should flip that model. It should be turned upside down because as the Apostle Paul went through his life, he started by saying, "I'm the least of these." Among the leaders in the church, I'm the least. By the end, he was saying, "I'm the chief of sinners." His estimate of himself, the more he learned about the Lord and the lifestyle of the Lord and the words and teachings of Jesus, he said, "Among the saints, I'm the least." That's the leadership we are to be modeling in the church. That is the authority of the church. Jesus says "This is not what I want you to do. I don't want you be like the kings of the Gentiles."

26 "But you are not to be like that." "That is not the leadership I want you twelve... You shouldn't be sitting in here, fighting over who is going to be the most awesome. You shouldn't be in here fighting over when the kingdom is established here upon the earth, which gets to rule right next to... That shouldn't be the struggle right now." He then gives them this lesson. I think it's a great lesson for all of us. **"Instead..."** Here's how we serve one another so that everyone wins in the church. **"...the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves."**

What is Jesus referring to when he talks about the youngest? I don't know if you remember the day in time when young people had super high value and ultimate respect for senior adults. I grew up in this type of home and when I didn't show it, my dad sent me to the room to wait for my spanking. Waiting for the spanking was worse than the spanking. And if you were a good parent, you'd let it go 30 to 45 minutes. As one lady in our church reminded us, then you'd hear your dad coming up the stairs and you

heard every beltloop as he took off his belt. My brother would love to hold out. "Dad won't break me!" I'm like, "You're crazy!" I was screaming on the back swing. I didn't want it. I got it over with as quickly as possible. But the idea was respecting senior adults.

I'm trying to teach this to my kids. We should all be teaching this to our kids. If there are four seats in a crowded room, whether it be a party, an airport, or the shuttle at the airport. When you get on the train at DFW and there are only four seats and it has the handicap sign, I interpret that is for handicapped and Gene and Norma. That's who that's for, people that don't need to be standing that long. And when you walk in and you see a 12-year-old sitting on them... It's fine if there's nobody in the room or no one on the train. But, we were trained as young people that you got up and you gave your seat or your dad grabbed you by the ear and pulled you off the seat and spanked you there and then again at home. This is how this works. How many of you had parents that spanked you even before you did anything wrong? The just wanted to get one in the bank before something happened. That was my dad. My dad hates it. He says, "With your comedy, don't go into how I spanked you." He spanked me a lot. And a lot of it had to do with respect.

I was talking to Mike this morning. Mike's father passed away a few days ago and they had the funeral this week. He said it was good to be back in a town where when they saw the funeral procession, everyone pulled over. That's called respect. That's all it is.

Jesus is saying the youngest and the one who rules like the one who serves. This is that idea that you have to be aware. That's what I'm teaching my kids. Be aware. You know how kids are fast and always moving. I'm trying to teach them, "When you see a senior adult... I know you're not trying to be disrespectful, but that person is old, slow, fearful... There are all sorts of words that we can put on that. You've got to be careful with your movements around them. Being careful, being aware shows them respect." You are thinking about the other person and that is exactly what Jesus is talking about. He's telling his disciples, "Listen, I'm going away. You guys are going to lead the church. You're going to get this thing kicked off. You're going to start this thing and guess what that means? I want you to have the mind of ultimate respect when you see people. I want you to have the desire to care for them, the desire to give up your seat for them."

27 "For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves."

We saw this in the very first week, six and a half years ago, when we started this series that Jesus got up and he put on the towel and he washed the feet. He wasn't just speaking this stuff; he was showing this stuff, the role of the servant.

They were like, "Why would you do this; you're our master?"

"This is what I want you guys to see. This is how you are to respond to one another. By getting the leadership of the church, this is what you are supposed to be doing."

28 “You are those who have stood by me in my trials. 29 And I confer on you a kingdom...” There’s a big conversation. What did the kingdom mean? “Jesus, when are you starting this kingdom? When does it start? Does it start right now or are we talking about a future kingdom?” In my theology, I believe that he is talking about a kingdom that is not yet established upon this Earth, but yet we are part of the kingdom of God. ***“...just as my Father conferred one on me, 30 so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”***

He has this conversation about them being on thrones next to him, ruling, but let me tell you what ruling in the kingdom of God looks like. It looks a lot like serving. And the one who serves is the one that helps everyone win. That’s what we want to do today as a church family. We want to prepare our hearts, to prepare each one of us who follows Jesus, who has placed faith in Jesus, to prepare to take the Lord’s Supper.

If you want to flip over to 1 Corinthians 11... Keep your place there in Matthew 26; we are going to close the service with that. We are going to look at three steps that we take when we take the Lord’s Supper.

1) The first one is simply **reconcile relationships**. We’re going to talk a little bit about what it means to make sure we are in relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

2) **Remembering Christ’s death**. So, remember at taking the Lord’s Supper, we’re remembering Christ’s death and we’re looking forward to his return.

3) The last one, which Paul is going to share with us in 1 Corinthians 11, is we want to **examine our hearts**.

Reconciling relationships. In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul comes to them, he’s a dad to them, he’s going to point out what’s going on in the church and he simply says this: ***17 In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. 18 In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. 19 No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God’s approval. 20 So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord’s Supper you eat...***

If you’ve ever been part of a divisive church... In this church, years ago... We’ve had our struggles. We’re going to see here in a second that we should press pause on the Lord’s Supper button, we should not take that until we deal with our relationships. We should hold off, as we are going to see in a second, to make sure we know when a church is centered on the gospel of Jesus, when a church is centered on the cross of Christ, this is what brings unity.

Show me a marriage... This is why I’m grateful with what Gene and Norma just shared. They just gave you the gospel message. “We wouldn’t have made it if our marriage was not centered on the gospel of Christ.” But, I can tell you... I’m not going to ask them, but they’ll be nodding because they are Baptist. They’re back there mooring and nodding in agreement like the Baptists do. You knew I was going to jab the Baptists as a gift to you today, Norma. That was my little 70th wedding anniversary gift.

Ask them where they were in their relationship with the Lord when there was conflict. And then ask them how they resolved conflict. I'm tell you they brought everything back to the cross of Christ. "I'm going to forgive you because I've been forgiven. And I'm not going to wait for you to change every time; I'm just going to have the spirit and attitude in me because that is how I stand before the Lord."

21 ...for when you are eating... He's going to paint the picture here of what's going on in the Church of Corinth. ... ***some of you go ahead with your own private suppers.*** There is division in the church. The Lord's Supper meal is supposed to bring us together, not separate us into elite Christians, better Christians, Christians... That's not the point of this meal. ***As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. 22 Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!***

Here is the bottom line of the first part of reconciling relationships. **The church** – specifically the church at Corinth in this situation – **was divided over a meal that was meant to express unity.** That's the first thing we need to understand this morning about the Lord's Supper as we come together. If you want to leverage your authority to help others win, you will serve to help others win. You will not take this lofty approach to the church and to the authority and leadership in the church.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer puts it like this. *"It is the command of Jesus that none should come to the altar with a heart that is unreconciled to his brother."*

We will look at that text in just a second. Worship... You should pause, you should delay worship... This is how serious it is to be reconciled to your brother. You should delay worship until you are reconciled to your brother or sister in Christ.

I believe that example there also applies in your marriage. Somebody came up to me after the first service and said, "We didn't realize how much our marriage would be affected today by a message on the Lord's Supper. Why? It's because a husband and wife who are at odds with one another right now... You're brothers and sisters in Christ; you should be reconciling your relationship before you take of the cup and eat of the bread. It may be as simple this morning as leaning over and grabbing your wife's hand and saying these words. Mouth it with me, guys. "I'm sorry. Will you forgive me? What I said was stupid. What I did was stupid." I'm preparing you for the Lord's Supper so be writing this down right now. "I wish I never would have said that; forgive me." This is reconciling, this is the heart. You shouldn't even approach the altar if you're unreconciled to a brother.

If this command of Jesus applies to every service of worship, indeed, to every prayer we utter, then it most certainly applies to reception of the Lord's Supper."

This is what Jesus said and I put in The Message for you. Matthew 5: 23-24. ***If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, 24 abandon your offering, leave immediately, go to this friend and make things right. Then and only then, come back and work things out with God.***

For some of you, this will freak you out when I bring up this point, but you'll understand in a minute why I'm okay with encouraging you to do this. For some of you, you received the elements today and you're unreconciled to a brother or sister in Christ. I'm going to ask that you hold the elements and not partake as we do in just a moment. Go be reconciled and then later today, maybe with your family or with your spouse, partake in these elements.

And maybe someone who is in here right now... And this is tough because I know the lawsuits that take place in Branson. I know the business dealings and people try to bring me into this all the time. "I think I've been at the church longer so Ted will be on my side." Listen, the money of your business isn't what's concerning me right now; it's your relationship. We are concerned, first and foremost, with your relationship with that man who considers himself to be your brother in Christ or with that woman who considers herself to be a sister in Christ. Hold back on this.

If there's someone in here right now... We are going to be singing before we take of the elements together we're going to be worshipping together, we're going to have a time to examine. If that's you, get up and walk over to that person. If that's in your marriage, do that with your spouse right now. If it's a young person in here who was rebellious toward a parent, disrespectful toward a parent, don't take the Lord's Supper until you turn to your parents and say, "Will you forgive me for the way I mouthed off to you this morning?" This is how seriously we take this. We go on from reconciling relationships.

We are **remembering Christ death**. We're also remember his second coming. Going on in 1 Corinthians 11, Paul says this: ***26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*** We take the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of every month and we will until the Lord returns. Jesus put it this way and I want to really explain to you what it means to remember the death of the Lord because we have so many different denominations and church backgrounds represented in here.

This is what Jesus said in Luke 22. ***"This is my body given for you..."*** If you went to a Baptist church, this was written on the table at the front of the church. ***"...do this in remembrance of me."*** If you've ever wondered... I know that's the Lord's Supper table that you've marched down to, but for many people when they walk into some churches and they are at the center aisle, it's the first thing they ever see, right below the Ten Commandments. You've got the Ten Commandments and you've got this "Do in remembrance of me." Some might say, "Why did we actually put that on the table?"

I'll tell you why because this is very important to understand. I'm going to give you two schools of thought, two different approaches to the Lord's Supper. There are actually four, but for the sake of time today, we are only going to share two. We can post on the website and maybe put all four it in the home group questions.

We'll start with the **Memorialism (Baptist) – the bread and the wine represent the body and the blood of Christ**. I put "Baptist" there so you'll know who we're talking to, but this is very important. This is how I grew up. This idea is still what I believe, it's still what I hold to be true. The bread and the wine or the Welches grape juice. I may differ from you on that because however you take the Lord's Supper....

The key word here though is *represent* the body and blood of Christ. We are taking of bread and we're taking of the cup that represent the body and blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation (Roman Catholic) – The bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. If you grew up in a catholic church, you know this word. This is a humongous word. I just put Roman Catholic there for those who grew up in that tradition. You can see the differences. The bread and the wine don't represent, they *become* the body and blood of Christ.

I was sharing with someone earlier. We lost three young people when I was in high school and we went to the funeral and it was at a Catholic Church. There were probably six or seven hundred seats, but it was overflowing. If you've ever been to a Catholic Church, you know the way they treat the bread and the wine is very different than how we treat the bread and the wine because we believe this represents.

I've seen priests leave the station of the Eucharist, walk down and actually take... I saw this with my friend. He wasn't a believer and didn't know what was going on. He went up and took the bread. The priest was giving him very clear instructions on it to. He took it and it was one where they lay it in the hands. As he walked back with it, I could tell he didn't have a clue what was going on. He was just kind of going with the flow and the crowd. The priest stopped everything and walked down and took the bread out of his hand. Why? Their belief is the bread and the wine is... this has become... this is transubstantiation. I'm going to create a new word for this. We're going to have a much simpler word to understand this.

When I just said for you to take this home with you, some of you were shocked. It's probably because you come from a faith tradition that believes this has become the blood and the body of Christ. We take this to remember the death of our savior. This is a reminder to us.

Let's move on to the last one. We are going to **examine the heart** today. This is where we are going to spend a little bit of time as we worship together. We're going to ask that no one leave. Just stay and be a part as we close out the service. But as we continue in 1 Corinthians 11, let's look at what it means to examine the heart.

27 So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner... The idea here... It doesn't say unworthy person. Just to remind all of us, every person in here is unworthy. It's the righteousness of Jesus that makes us worthy. It is his righteousness imputed on us, given to us when we place faith in Jesus. It is not saying you are an unworthy person; it's saying the manner in which we take this Lord's Supper, let's look at that and examine that.

...will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. If you are not a believer in Christ Jesus, first and foremost, we encourage you to place faith in Jesus today. If you've never taken the Lord's Supper and you've been coming here for quite some time, today may be the day of your salvation where you place faith in Jesus. It's by faith alone in Christ alone. If you have placed faith in Jesus, we invite you to take the Lord's Supper with us today. If you have not, we would not have you to drink judgment upon yourself, so we would encourage you to refrain during this last part of our service today.

28 Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. That's all of us in here. **29 For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.**

Today, what we are asking you to do, as we prepare for the Lord's Supper, is to confess attitudes, actions, and words, to reconcile relationships as we remember the death of our Lord and Savior. I'm just going to invite you to bow your head as we begin that. As we sing and as we worship, I'm going to ask that the Holy Spirit call you by name in relationships and attitudes and actions and words. This is your time with the Lord. We decided not to rush this part of the service, but we are going to sing. You can confess sins before the Lord, confess attitudes, pray, offer thanksgiving and gratefulness for the death and the sacrifice of our savior, thanking him for your salvation. Take this moment as we sing and worship and as you pray.