

A scenic landscape photograph of a mountain valley. In the foreground, a river flows through a lush green valley, with tall reeds growing in the water. The river reflects the sky and the surrounding greenery. In the middle ground, there are rolling green hills and a large, prominent mountain peak with a rocky, golden-brown face. The sky is a deep blue with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Your Spiritual Authority

A Teaching Outline

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Your Spiritual Authority

Believers in the work of Christ have been given authority to heal the sick, cast out evil spirits and do the things that Jesus did while here on this earth. That authority has been given to all disciple of Christ.

Rather than praying only, we need to speak the word of God with authority in order to help meet the needs of others as well as ourselves.

An understanding of spiritual authority is necessary to build our faith. This faith results in power over the powers of darkness.

As you study the following scriptures, ask God to help you understand how this authority will enable you to set in heavenly place.

Jesus gave his authority to servants.

Mark 13:34

"The coming of the Son of Man can be compared with that of a man who left home to go on a trip. He gave each of his employees' instructions about the work they were to do, and he told the gatekeeper to watch for his return.

Months of planning go into a wedding, the birth of a baby, a career change, a speaking engagement, the purchase of a home. Do you place the same importance on preparing for Christ's return, the most important event in your life? Its results will last for eternity.

You dare not postpone your preparations because you do not know when his return will occur. The way to prepare is to study God's Word and live by its instructions each day. Only then will you be ready.

How authority works

Matthew 8:8-9

Then the officer said, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come into my home. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed! I know, because I am under the authority of my superior officers and I have authority over my soldiers. I only need to say, 'Go,' and they go, or 'Come,' and they come. And if I say to my slaves, 'Do this or that,' they do it."

This Roman officer (also called a centurion) was a career military officer in the Roman army with control over 100 soldiers. Roman soldiers, of all people, were hated by the Jews for their oppression, control, and ridicule. Yet this man's genuine faith amazed Jesus! This hated Gentile's faith put to shame the pompous piety of many of the Jewish religious leaders.

Authority commands

Matthew 8:13

Then Jesus said to the Roman officer, "Go on home. What you have believed has happened." And the young servant was healed that same hour.

The Roman officer could have let many obstacles stand between him and Jesus—pride, doubt, money, language, distance, time, self-sufficiency, power, race. But he didn't. If he did not let these barriers block his approach to Jesus, we don't need to either. What keeps you from Christ?

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Jesus told the crowd that many religious Jews who should be in the Kingdom would be excluded because of their lack of faith. Entrenched in their religious traditions, they could not accept Christ and his new message. We must be careful not to become so set in our religious habits that we expect God to work only in specified ways. Don't limit God by your mind-set and lack of faith.

Authority is exercised through spoken words.

Proverbs 18:21

Those who love to talk will experience the consequences, for the tongue can kill or nourish life.

Authority is exercised through our spoken word.

Jesus used his authority to cast out demons.

Matthew 28:18

Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth.

God gave Jesus authority over heaven and earth. On the basis of that authority, Jesus told his disciples to make more disciples as they preached, baptized, and taught. With this same authority, Jesus still commands us to tell others the Good News and make them disciples for the Kingdom.

Jesus used his authority to cast out demons.

Mark 1:27

Amazement gripped the audience, and they began to discuss what had happened. "What sort of new teaching is this?" they asked excitedly. "It has such authority! Even evil spirits obey his orders!"

The evil spirit knew at once that Jesus was the Holy One sent from God. By including this event in his Gospel, Mark was establishing Jesus' credentials, showing that even the spiritual underworld recognized Jesus as the Messiah.

Jesus used the spoken word to cast out demons.

Matthew 8:16

That evening many demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus. All the spirits fled when he commanded them to leave; and he healed all the sick.

Matthew continues to show Jesus' kingly nature. Through a single touch, Jesus healed (8:3, 15); when he spoke a single word, evil spirits fled his presence (8:16). Jesus has authority over all evil powers and all earthly disease.

He also has power and authority to conquer sin. Sickness and evil are consequences of living in a fallen world. But in the future, when God removes all sin, there will be no more sickness and death. Jesus' healing miracles were a taste of what the whole world will one day experience in God's Kingdom.

Jesus gave authority to heal the sick to his disciples.

Matthew 10:8

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received!

Jesus gave the disciples a principle to guide their actions as they ministered to others: "Give as freely as you have received." Because God has showered us with his blessings, we should give generously to others of our time, love, and possessions.

The early church healed the sick in the same manner.

Acts 3:6

But Peter said, "I don't have any money for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!"

The lame man asked for money, but Peter gave him something much better—the use of his legs. We often ask God to solve a small problem, but he wants to give us a whole new life and help for all our problems. He may say, "I've got something even better for you." You may ask God for what you want, but don't be surprised when he gives you what you really *need*.

"In the name of Jesus Christ" means "by the authority of Jesus Christ." The apostles were doing this healing through the Holy Spirit's power, not their own.

Jesus gave authority to cure disease.

Luke 9:1

One day Jesus called together his twelve apostles and gave them power and authority to cast out demons and to heal all diseases.

Note Jesus' methods of leadership. He empowered his disciples (9:1), gave them specific instructions so they knew what to do (9:3, 4), told them how to deal with tough times (9:5), and held them accountable (9:10). As you lead others, study the Master Leader's pattern.

We are to heal the sick through the authority of Christ.

James 5:14-15

Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. [15] And their prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make them well. And anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.

People in the church are not alone. Members of Christ's body should be able to count on others for support and prayer, especially when they are sick or suffering. The elders should be on call to respond to the illness of any member, and the church should be sensitive to the needs of all its members.

The "prayer offered in faith" does not refer to the faith of the sick person but to the faith of the people praying. God heals, faith doesn't, and all prayers are subject to God's will. But prayer is part of God's healing process.

Healing through the laying on of hands

Mark 16:17-18

These signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak new languages. [18] They will be able to handle snakes with safety, and if they drink anything poisonous, it won't hurt them. They will be able to place their hands on the sick and heal them."

There are times when God intervenes miraculously to protect his followers. Occasionally he gives them special powers. Paul handled a snake safely (Acts 28:5), and the disciples healed the sick (Matthew 10:1; Acts 3:7, 8).

Authority is given to the 70 disciples.

Luke 10:17

When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, "Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!"

The disciples had seen tremendous results as they ministered in Jesus' name and with his authority. They were elated by the victories they had witnessed, and Jesus shared their enthusiasm. He helped them get their priorities right, however, by reminding them of their most important victory—that their names were registered in heaven.

This honor was more important than any of their accomplishments. As we see God's wonders at work in and through us, we should not lose sight of the greatest wonder of all—our heavenly citizenship.

Spiritual authority is accessed through faith.

Mark 9:17-29

One of the men in the crowd spoke up and said, "Teacher, I brought my son for you to heal him. He can't speak because he is possessed by an evil spirit that won't let him talk. [18] And whenever this evil spirit seizes him, it throws him violently to the ground and makes him foam at the mouth and grind his teeth and become rigid. So I asked your disciples to cast out the evil spirit, but they couldn't do it."

Jesus said to them, "You faithless people! How long must I be with you until you believe? How long must I put up with you? Bring the boy to me." [20] So they brought the boy. But when the evil spirit saw Jesus, it threw the child into a violent convulsion, and he fell to the ground, writhing and foaming at the mouth. [21] "How long has this been happening?" Jesus asked the boy's father.

He replied, "Since he was very small. [22] The evil spirit often makes him fall into the fire or into water, trying to kill him. Have mercy on us and help us. Do something if you can."

[23] "What do you mean, 'If I can'?" Jesus asked. "Anything is possible if a person believes."

[24] The father instantly replied, "I do believe, but help me not to doubt!"

[25] When Jesus saw that the crowd of onlookers was growing, he rebuked the evil spirit. "Spirit of deafness and muteness," he said, "I command you to come out of this child and never enter him again!" [26] Then the spirit screamed and threw the boy into another violent convulsion and left him. The boy lay there motionless, and he appeared to be dead. A murmur ran through the crowd, "He's dead." [27] But Jesus took him by the hand and helped him to his feet, and he stood up.

[28] Afterward, when Jesus was alone in the house with his disciples, they asked him, "Why couldn't we cast out that evil spirit?"

[29] Jesus replied, "This kind can be cast out only by prayer."

As the three disciples came down from the mountain with Jesus, they passed from a reassuring experience of God's presence to a frightening experience of evil. The beauty they had just seen must have made the ugliness seem even uglier. As our spiritual vision improves and allows us to see and understand God better, we will

also be able to see and understand evil better. We would be overcome by its horror if we did not have Jesus with us to take us through it safely. Don't be afraid to confront evil and suffering, no matter how ugly or horrible. Jesus goes with you.

Why couldn't the disciples cast out the evil spirit? In 6:13 we read that they cast out demons while on their mission to the villages. Perhaps they had special authority only for that trip, or perhaps their faith was faltering. Mark tells this story to show that the battle with Satan is a difficult, ongoing struggle. Victory over sin and temptation comes through faith in Jesus Christ, not through our own efforts.

We can automatically obtain anything we want if we just think positively. Jesus meant that anything is *possible* if we believe, because nothing is too difficult for God. We cannot have everything we pray for as if by magic, but with faith, we can have everything we need to serve him.

The attitude of trust and confidence that the Bible calls *belief* or *faith* (Hebrews 11:1,6) is not something we can obtain without help. Faith is a gift from God (Ephesians 2:8, 9). No matter how much faith we have, we never reach the point of being self-sufficient. Faith is not stored away like money in the bank. Growing in faith is a constant process of daily renewing our trust in Jesus.

The disciples would often face difficult situations that could be resolved only through prayer. Prayer is the key that unlocks faith in our life. Effective prayer needs both the attitude of complete dependence and the action of asking. Prayer demonstrates our reliance on God as we humbly invite him to fill us with faith and power. There is no substitute for prayer, especially in circumstances that seem impossible.

Have faith as a grain of mustard seed.

Matthew 17:20

"You didn't have enough faith," Jesus told them. "I assure you, even if you had faith as small as a mustard seed you could say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it would move. Nothing would be impossible."

The disciples had been unable to cast out this demon, and they asked Jesus why. He said their faith was too small. It is the power of God, plus our faith, that moves mountains. The mustard seed was the smallest particle imaginable. Jesus said that even faith as small or undeveloped as a mustard seed would have been sufficient.

Perhaps the disciples had tried to cast out the demon with their own ability rather than God's. There is great potential in even a little faith when we trust in God's power to act. If we feel weak or powerless as Christians, we should examine our faith, making sure we are trusting God's power, not our own ability to produce results.

Jesus wasn't condemning the disciples for substandard faith; he was trying to show how important faith would be in their future ministry. If you are facing a problem that seems as big and immovable as a mountain, turn your eyes from the mountain and look to Christ for more faith. Only then will you be able to overcome the obstacles that may stand in your way.

Allow your authority in Christ to build your faith in healing the sick and casting out demons.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door.

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

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Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print

