The Authority of the Believer

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Main Text

> *"Behold, I give unto you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." — Luke 10:19 (NKJV)*

INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest problems in the Church is not that the devil has too much power. It is that many believers do not understand the authority they already possess.

Too many Christians are afraid of the devil. We are intimidated by sickness, circumstances, opposition, fear, temptation, and spiritual attacks.

But Jesus did not tell us to be afraid of the devil. Jesus said: "Behold, I give unto you power…"

The word we need to understand here is authority.

Authority is delegated power.

Authority is the right, permission, and legal backing to act on behalf of another.

There is a difference between power and authority. Power is the ability to do something. Authority is the right to exercise that power.

Think about a police officer standing in the middle of the road. A huge truck coming toward him has far more physical power than that police officer. But when the officer raises his hand, the truck stops. Why? Not because the officer is stronger than the truck, but because the officer is backed by the government. That is authority.

When you understand this, you understand something important about your relationship with the devil: You don't confront the enemy on the basis of your own strength. You confront him on the basis of the authority that backs you.

1. KNOW THAT YOU HAVE AUTHORITY

The first thing the believer must settle is this: Jesus has given us authority.

> *"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." — Matthew 28:18 (KJV)*

Then He turned around and commissioned His disciples to operate on His behalf. This means we are not unauthorized people trying to fight the devil. We are authorized representatives of Jesus Christ.

Jesus demonstrated authority throughout His earthly ministry. He exercised authority over demons and evil spirits, sickness and disease, nature, sin, and death. Then He delegated authority to His followers.

> *"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils…" — Mark 16:17 (KJV)*

Notice: “In my name.” Jesus is essentially saying, I am giving you permission to use My authority.

Think about someone giving you power of attorney. You are authorized to act in that person's name. In the same way, the believer has been authorized to operate in the name of Jesus.

Authority doesn't beg. Authority commands.

You don't beg darkness to leave when you turn on the light. And you don't need to be afraid of an enemy over whom Christ has given you authority.

2. KNOW WHAT BACKS YOUR AUTHORITY

Authority is only effective when there is something behind it. The police officer has authority because the government stands behind the badge. In the same way, our spiritual authority has divine backing.

There are four pillars that back the believer's authority.

The Name of Jesus

> *“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord...” — Philippians 2:10–11 (KJV)*

The name of Jesus is not merely how we close our prayers. “In Jesus' name” is not punctuation. The name represents His authority. We need to learn to wield the name of Jesus with understanding.

The Word of God

When Jesus was tempted by Satan in Matthew 4, Jesus repeatedly responded: “It is written...”

The devil does not respect your emotions. He does not care how eloquently you speak. What he must recognize is the authority of God's Word.

> *“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void...” — Isaiah 55:11 (KJV)*

That is why you must know what is written. You cannot exercise authority confidently when you do not know what God has said.

The Blood of Jesus

> *“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony...” — Revelation 12:11 (KJV)*

The blood is the legal foundation of our redemption. Our authority is not based on our goodness. It is based on what Christ accomplished for us.

The Holy Spirit

> *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you...” — Acts 1:8 (KJV)*

The Holy Spirit supplies divine power for the execution of our authority. Romans 8:11 tells us that the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us.

If the Spirit that conquered death lives in you, you are not powerless.

Remember the four pillars: The Name. The Word. The Blood. The Holy Spirit.

3. DEVELOP THE MINDSET OF AUTHORITY

You can possess authority and still fail to exercise it because your mind has not caught up with what God has given you. There are four things you must constantly remind yourself of:

Identity: Who am I?

> *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." — Galatians 3:26 (KJV)*

Your authority flows from your identity. Acts 19 tells us about the sons of Sceva who tried to use the name of Jesus without understanding their identity.

> *"Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" — Acts 19:15 (KJV)*

That's a powerful question: Do you know who you are? Don't confront spiritual battles from your natural identity. Know who you are in Christ.

Position: Where am I seated?

> *"Hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." — Ephesians 2:6 (KJV)*

You must learn to speak from where you are seated. Authority is connected to position. A president doesn't have authority because he shouts louder than everybody else. His office gives weight to his words.

You are seated with Christ. So don't approach spiritual battles as someone trying to climb into victory. Approach them from your position in Christ.

Ownership: What has God committed to me?

> *"The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD'S: but the earth hath he given to the children of men." — Psalm 115:16 (KJV)*

You must develop an ownership mentality toward whatever God has committed to your stewardship: your body, your mind, your marriage, your children, your finances, your calling, and your ministry.

Whatever God has placed under your stewardship must not be casually surrendered to the enemy. The devil likes occupying unguarded territory.

Sometimes you need to say: "This belongs to God, and God entrusted it to me. You cannot have it."

Ability: What can I do through Christ?

> *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." — Philippians 4:13 (KJV)*

Stop constantly reminding yourself of how helpless you are. Your confidence is not in yourself. Your confidence is in the One strengthening you.

When the enemy says, "You cannot overcome this," remind yourself: I am not helpless. I am not hopeless. I am not powerless. Christ strengthens me.

4. EXERCISE YOUR AUTHORITY

Finally, authority that is never exercised produces no result.

> *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." — James 4:7 (KJV)*

Notice that Scripture doesn't say: Ask God to resist the devil for you. It says: Resist the devil.

There are things God has already given you authority to confront.

> *"Neither give place to the devil." — Ephesians 4:27 (KJV)*

Don't give him a foothold. Don't give him space. Don't give him territory. Don't give him an opportunity.

The devil is a thief. Jesus said that the thief comes to steal, kill and destroy. If you caught a thief breaking into your house, you wouldn't offer him a chair. You would resist him. That is the attitude believers must develop spiritually.

This requires boldness. The enemy attacks your boldness, confidence, conviction and courage because he knows that if he can intimidate you, you may never exercise the authority you already possess.

> *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." — Ephesians 6:10–11 (KJV)*

Notice: Be strong IN THE LORD. Not in yourself.

The armor of God is like the believer's spiritual uniform. Think again about the police officer. The uniform identifies him. The badge represents authority. The government backs him. Then the officer must actually stand in the road and exercise that authority.

Likewise, believers must stop merely talking about authority and begin walking in it.

CONCLUSION

Authority is delegated power. Jesus has given the believer authority.

That authority is backed by: The Name of Jesus. The Word of God. The Blood of Jesus. The Holy Spirit.

But you must maintain the right mindset: Identity — know who you are. Position — know where you are seated. Ownership — know what God has entrusted to you. Ability — know what you can do through Christ.

And finally: Exercise it.

Don't give place to the devil. Don't allow fear to make you surrender territory that God has already placed under your stewardship. Don't beg an enemy you've been authorized to resist. And don't depend on your own strength.

Go back to where we started:

> *"Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." — Luke 10:19 (KJV)*

The question is therefore not simply: “Do I have authority?” Jesus has already answered that.

The question is: “Will I walk in the authority He has given me?”

Know your authority.
Know what backs your authority.
Develop the mindset of authority.
And exercise your authority.

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