

Submission and Authority (Luke 7:8)

by Alan Redpath

The sermon emphasizes the importance of submission to God's sovereignty and authority in order to experience total power and authority over the dead.

Duration: 31:02

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 7:8, Romans 6:16, Ephesians 5:21, Hebrews 13:17, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:5

Topics: "Authority"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of the Centurion servant and highlights the devastating effects of sin in the life of a believer. The preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing and submitting to God's authority in order to have power over oneself. He warns against the danger of rejecting the truth and leaving unchanged. The sermon concludes with a plea for listeners to consider their own submission to God's sovereignty and to seek deliverance from sin.

Transcript

Shall we just look to God a moment in a word of prayer together? Let us pray. Father, we thank Thee tonight for all that Thou hast been saying to us through the lips of Thy servants, from Thy word, by Thy Spirit. And now in the closing moments of this gathering, we ask very earnestly that there may be a response from every one of us listening, either here or at Eskin Street or by landline, a response from every heart, which will bring joy to Thy dear servants, and honour to Thy name.

Therefore we pray, speak Lord, for Thy servants hear it. Speak just now. Some message to meet my need, which Thou only dost know.

Speak now through Thy holy word and make me see some wonderful truth Thou hast to show to me. For Jesus' sake, Amen. I would like you to turn with me this evening for our closing message to a passage of Scripture in Luke chapter 7. The opening verses, had I time I would read them.

I must ask you to have this particular narrative, this particular story in your mind. I imagine most of you are at least in some measure familiar with it. The story of the centurion's servants.

But especially to notice this evening his statement that he made to our Lord Jesus Christ. In the 8th verse. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers.

And I say unto one, Go, and he goeth. To another, Come, and he cometh. And to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

We have been listening in the last two evenings to what I think I could describe without exaggeration, a devastating revelation of sin. The damage that sin does in the life of a child of God. Not only to himself, but to others.

Someone said to me after the meeting on Monday, that was an awful meeting. And he was using that word in its right sense. An awful meeting.

As I've been listening and as I'm sure you have been listening, with hungry hearts to everything that God has for us, speaking for myself, I would be very sorry for the individual who could listen to these tremendous messages and go away unmoved. And yet God knows such is the stubbornness of our hearts that we can do that even at test. May I lovingly say to you, my dear listener, tonight, wherever or whoever you are, that truth revealed and rejected soon becomes truth in which I am disinterested.

And truth in which I am disinterested will one day be truth upon which I am condemned before the judgment seat of Christ. This is a very solemn moment, a very solemn convention. I suppose that Keswick Convention, like any other convention which stands for these truths, has many critics.

Perhaps some of them may be justified, I wouldn't know. But I have a feeling, knowing my own heart, that some of the people who criticize have themselves been condemned by the truth that Keswick proclaimed and have resisted its implications and therefore have turned aside and professed to be disinterested in it and find themselves now facing the awful sense of God's condemnation. And how soon does light, which has been rejected, become darkness? The awful peril that somebody here, thinking perhaps we have all the answers, you have the answers, thinking perhaps there's nothing further you can be taught, thinking perhaps you know the theory of it, yet can resist the very heart of the message and leave this place untouched.

Oh, the burden on our hearts, that truth may grip and transform life here this evening. I imagine that the cry from many of your hearts tonight after the messages of the last evening is, Lord, how may I have power? Oh, to be free from myself, dear Lord. Oh, to be lost in Thee.

Oh, that it may be no more I but Christ who lives in me. Oh, that there might be an end of the years of bondage, the years of misery, the years of simply putting up a show of Christian profession, of pretending to be something that I'm really not. Oh, that there might be a stop of this, and that this year's Keswick might mark a transformation in our lives that's going to make a difference for all the future.

We just cannot go on on the level upon which we've been living. Somehow I feel that unless that happens tonight, many in this tent may not be at many more Keswick. And yet the cry in so many of our hearts is, how may I have power over myself? To help us to answer that question, I want you to consider with me tonight this statement which this centurion made to our Lord Jesus Christ.

For I see in it here a principle of life. He said, I am a man set under authority. And I say unto one, go and he goeth, and to another, come and he cometh.

Now deliberately, I have missed out one important word in that statement, to which I'll come back in a moment. But I want us to be clear tonight, crystal clear, about this principle of life. And if I fail to observe this principle, then I will never know the glory and the thrill of deliverance from sin.

I am a man under authority. That is submission. Having under me soldiers, that is authority.

I am submitted to a throne. I am submitted to an empire. And therefore, in the area entrusted to me, I wield the power of that throne.

I have kissed a scepter. And because I have kissed that scepter, I wield the authority of that scepter wherever I go. I am in authority, but I am only in authority because I am under the authority of Caesar.

This meant for that centurion several things. It meant, for instance, submission to a person. He was submitted to all the principles of the Roman Empire as they were expressed by Caesar.

He had bent the knee before the throne. There had been a thrilling and never to be forgotten day in his life when personally he had bowed before the emperor. He'd kissed the scepter.

He'd submitted to the authority of that great power. And because of this, he had been entrusted to rule in an area committed to him. It was submission to a person.

Not only so, it was the submission of his entire personality. When that centurion kissed that scepter and submitted himself to Caesar, that was the end of his personal independence of life. It was the end of any right at all, except the right to do Caesar's will.

He had no further choice in the matter of dress, in the matter of friendship, in the matter of location or assignment or task or duty. He was completely and totally sold out to the purposes of Caesar. It was the complete submission of his personality.

It was not only submission to a person. It was not only the submission of his personality. But it was submission with a view to a purpose being accomplished.

And what was that purpose? It was to see that the will of Caesar was expressed and carried out in the area over which he was entrusted to rule. It was there by rugged discipline. It was there in his personal life to ensure that he became perfected through experience as a soldier.

And as he himself grew in stature and in authority, so he would increasingly wield the area, the scepter of the emperor over ever an increasing area. It was entire submission in all those levels. I am a man under authority.

And I have under me soldiers. And because he was under authority, he himself was in power. His submission to Caesar was absolutely inseparable from his authority over the dominion in which he lived.

He was responsible for that territory allocated to him. He must insist on certain conditions being fulfilled in that area. The emperor looked to him to see to it that the law and the rule and the empire of Caesar was actually represented in that area and carried out.

He was trusted to see to it that the sovereignty of Caesar was expressed wherever that centurion ruled. I am a man under authority. That's an upward look to the throne before which he bowed.

Having under me soldiers, that's a downward look to the place over which he ruled, to the territory for which he was responsible. The upward look of submission to Caesar with a view to the downward look of authority in the area entrusted to him. Now this is a principle of life.

And this is not the case of a man, let me say, saying in his mind, Caesar's bossed me pretty roughly for ten years, now I'm going to take it out on everybody else. Oh no, that's not the principle. The principle is that there can be no happy, peaceful government in this territory for which I am responsible unless the will of Caesar is carried out here.

Now this is a principle, the entire root, the sum and substance, of the Christian gospel. Here is a man as God made him and as God intended him to be. The very dawn of divine revelation as we know it in the word of God, he made a man that he might have dominion, Genesis 1, 28, dominion over the fish of the sea, dominion over the birds of the air, dominion over every living thing that moveth.

He was to be in control and in authority, but it was on one condition. It was on the condition that he recognize the principle of entire submission to his creator. It was to be power through submission.

It was to dominion in every other area on the principle of total submission to his God. But he refused the principle. He rebelled against the authority and he lost the power.

And down through the centuries, amazing efforts he has made in order to recover his power where he's lost it without accepting the principle of submission. And as a matter of fact, he's made remarkable progress. He's tamed the wild beast.

He can fly across the skies at a breathtaking speed. He can split the atom. He can shoot at the moon.

He's even got the terrifying power to blow the globe into smithereens at any moment. But he has made no advance in conquering himself. And man today in this twentieth century who is intended to have absolute authority in his life finds himself sophisticated, educated, civilized, but a slave.

And my dear friend, I do not speak tonight entirely of the experience of a man without God. I speak to thousands of people listening to me tonight who have asked desperately at the throne of grace for an experience of forgiveness of sin and have cried out for God's free grace. But they have refused to submit to God's total sovereignty and therefore in their lives they're still slaves though they profess to be believers.

Let me ask you lovingly to consider this for a moment. You've seen yourself exposed in these last two nights as a carnal Christian, as a defeated man. Why are you like that? Why is it that your life is lived in that level? Why is it that there's no deliverance? Why is it that there's no failure? Tell me, before what throne are you worshipping? Who's your master? Who's your lord in your circle of friendship, in your home life, in your business, in your factory, where the influence of your life is felt in other places? Tell me, who really is governing your life today? Is it your own whim? Is it your emotion? Is it passion? Is it inner lust? Is it desire? Or is it the Lord Jesus? For it is desperately possible for a Christian to be indwelt by the Holy Ghost but dominated by the flesh.

To have the Spirit and yet the Spirit not to have him. To have forgiveness of sins. Oh yes, blessed condition to have forgiveness of sins.

But to be wallowing in the mire of despair and defeat for he has never experienced the blessedness of victory for the simple reason that he refuses to submit to total salvation. The principle of life. But quickly, this is not simply a principle of life.

For in the Lord Jesus I see this as a pattern for our lives. I omitted one word in that verse. It was the word also.

As this centurion came to the Lord concerning his servant's need, he saw in Christ a principle which he felt was the secret of the power of the Lord Jesus to meet the need of that servant. And the centurion said, I also am a man set under authority. I also.

I see this principle in your life. I see this as the secret of your radiance, your peace, your power. I see this somehow lies at the back, though I don't understand it, at the back of why it is that you're able to meet my need at this time.

I also am a man under authority. Jesus Christ, a man under authority? Indeed, yes. Submitted to a person? I do nothing of myself, he said.

I do always the will of him that sent me. Submission of a personality? Yes, indeed. He made himself of no reputation.

Took upon himself the form of a servant. Was made in the likeness of man. Being found in the fashion of a man, he humbled himself.

Was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Submission of his personality? Yes, and submission for a purpose. My need is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.

To get my father's will, which is done in heaven, done here. Done on earth. A life of perfect submission.

And therefore, a life of absolute authority. He has under him soldiers saying to this one, Go and he goeth. Yielded absolutely, entirely and completely to the will of his father.

He brought that will to bear on earth. He accomplished it in his life. And the devil recognized it and trembled before it.

And Satan feared and trembled. And the devils cried out, Who art thou, thou holy one of God? And they found themselves facing a power over which they had no control. For they found God's perfect man living in total submission to the authority of heaven.

And therefore having absolute control over the powers of darkness. And the devil feared and trembled. Wherefore, says the scripture, God hath highly exalted him.

And given him a name that is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. And every tongue confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

And praise God tonight we can say that power and authority once again is in the hands of the man Jesus Christ. At the right hand of God. There's a pattern for life.

This is the life that God has raised up to the throne. The life of total submission to his will. He's brought it through death, taken it out of the tomb.

And that life has ascended into heaven. And what has happened there, he has received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit. That he might impart that life of submission and that life of authority into every one of his children.

And beloved, Christianity today in the world is on the retreat. And it's fighting a losing battle. And we're losing out.

Because every false cult lives on that principle and we refuse to do so. The awful surge of communism in Red China is the cause of millions and millions of people who are submitted to this principle. Get the thing done at any cost.

And the Christian, though he has known the grace of God and though he has claimed forgiveness of sins, has refused total submission to the authority of our risen Lord. And therefore he finds himself defeated and beaten and carnal with no victory and no power and no glow and no reality. Let me say to you therefore tonight, dear friend, that here is the only seeker of power for my life and yours.

For the Lord Jesus is calling every one of us today to a life of total submission. That in an experience of that total submission to him, we may enter into an experience of total power over the dead. He said to a little band of his followers, Receive ye the Holy Spirit.

He showed them his hands and his side. And he said to them, that my Father hath sent me with all authority. Even so send I you under mine.

And from that moment there dawned upon history a religion which in the mind of heaven was destined to revolutionize humanity. And to change the whole course of world history. And to shape humanity to the uttermost parts of the earth.

With the tremendous revelation that God in Jesus Christ has won back for us this principle of absolute authority in every domain. Provided I accept total submission to Jesus Christ. And that means submission to his person.

To be his, completely his. Unreservedly his. And therefore yielded to all his purposes and all his principles.

Neither says the apostle Paul, yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. But yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead. And your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

For sin shall not have dominion over you. For you are not under law but you are, listen, you are under grace. And the whole base of Christian experience is essentially a new sovereignty.

No longer under law but under grace. No longer under the domination of self but under the domination of Jesus Christ. And in a superficial jazz kind of syncopated type of religion today.

When we offer to people, offer to people substitution. Christ for me on the cross. And people come and make their decision and want to receive forgiveness of sins and to go to heaven and to escape hell.

Well of course, who doesn't? But the church very often is offering something, my dear friend, that isn't the gospel at all. The gospel is not get your sins forgiven and come to Jesus. The gospel is not get saved and escape hell and go to heaven.

That's not the gospel. That's the fruit of the gospel. The gospel is nothing less than this, friend.

And are you willing on this night, in this convention for Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, to come into your life and take over and take control and so get hold of you that he will make it absolutely impossible for you

to go on living as you are. And he'll teach you to hate sin and long for holiness. And he'll impart in you a new nature.

A nature which is lived on the principle of total submission to the authority of heaven. And therefore in total authority over the power of hell. That's the gospel.

That means submission of your personality. Submission of your will. The citadel of self.

Therefore of your rights, of your talents, of your time, of your money, of your friends, of everything. Indeed, a Christian is, as that centurion was, a person who has no right at all except to see to it that the will of God is done in his life. He no longer has any right of independence.

He's not his own. He's bought with a price. He's sold out totally to the Lord Jesus Christ.

You cannot have substitution without identification. You cannot have free grace without full government. You cannot have a full salvation without his total control.

You accepted that principle in your life? Jesus said, you question it. Jesus said, if any man would follow me, let him come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

In other words, he insists, and this is not a matter for committee resolution. It is not a matter for debate or discussion. He insists with all his authority that he will have the preeminent.

That he will be Lord of all. And that means there's no habit which is not submitted to him for approval. And there's not an hour of our time which I can call my own.

It's his. And there's no interest in my life which is a vacation from vocation. And there's no detail in our lives over which Jesus Christ is not Lord.

It's the life of the Christian. And may I say there are a great many people today masquerading as Christians who are not a million miles within that experience. Who profess such a lot, but in whose lives there's never been the broken submission of the will and the surrender of the heart to the total, total domination of our Lord Jesus under authority.

Oh my friend, listen to me, you've been playing church for some years, haven't you? Just playing church. With all the doctrines right and sound and orthodox. But oh, so defeated and desperately in despair.

And just making it a kind of harbinger. It's only a theory. Deep down in your heart you've never really been gripped with this.

You've passed it on as truth perhaps suitable for the next person, but not for you. You prepare tonight to begin to live in submission to the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus. Can Jesus Christ look into your heart tonight and say of you, I say to him, come, and he cometh.

Go, and he goes. Can he say that to you? Or are there reservations? This is submission for a purpose that in your life and through your life the will of God might be accomplished. Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto me.

And his Spirit only comes upon the committed life. That's why he came upon the Lord Jesus in fullness of power. And he waits to come upon you now.

Here's the whole purpose of submission. That Jesus Christ might reign as Lord in your heart. Because listen, there's a kingdom in your life of which you're responsible.

And God holds you responsible. For the fruit of the Spirit is self-control. And how can there be self-control unless there's Spirit control? And am I willing, are you willing tonight for that to take place? For if I live after the flesh I will die.

But if through the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the flesh, we shall live. Brother, sister, do you want power? Oh power over yourself, power over temper, power over, oh just you. Power over habits and power over inbred sin, power over it all.

Here's the way, there's no other way. Bend at Calvary, submit to his authority, yield your faculties to him and let his life in you take over. Let it be in every department of your life.

Spirit control. Oh but you say I can't help being what I'm like, I can't help doing what I can. May I say it lovingly? Yes you can, you can.

You've bent before the wrong throne, that's why you do it. You've bowed in worship to yourself. You've worshipped something in your life which grieves God's Spirit and therefore quenches God's power.

But oh if in this congregation tonight there could be the end of that rebellion and the submission of your will in totality to Jesus Christ of Lord. Pilate, by submission to him, there's power over them. Would you put the Lord to the test right now?

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