

Understanding Spiritual Authority (Part 1): What Is Aaron That You Murmur Against Him?

by Carter Conlon

The sermon explores the nature of spiritual authority through the example of Aaron, emphasizing the importance of submission and faith in God's appointed leaders.

Duration: 1:00:04

Scripture: Numbers 17:5, Matthew 6:33, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 2:3, Philippians 4:11, Revelation 2:3

Topics: "Spiritual Authority"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by asking for an anointing of the Holy Spirit to convey the truth clearly and concisely. He prays for the grace for the church to live out this truth. The sermon focuses on understanding spiritual authority, particularly in the context of a last-day lawlessness that is increasing in society. The preacher highlights the breakdown of natural affection, decency, and respect for authority. He announces that this will be the first in a series of three messages on understanding spiritual authority, with the subsequent messages addressing the purpose and limits of authority and the inseparable link between authority and faith.

Transcript

This is going to be the first in a series of messages that I'll be preaching. It'll be a series of three messages on understanding spiritual authority. Today is the first message, and probably next Sunday morning, I'm not sure of that yet, but certainly possibly.

I'm going to be speaking on just understanding spiritual authority, part one, this afternoon. And then the next message will be on understanding the purpose and limits of authority. What to do in response when authority becomes questionable, abusive or unjust.

And then the third message I'm going to be speaking to you about the inseparable link between authority and faith. I can prove this to you in the scriptures, that people who are not under authority really are not people of faith and have no faith. I'm going to prove to you that authority and faith are inseparably linked.

I thank God for his mercy in allowing me to stand to be able to speak this message. I believe that I am a man under authority. As much as I know in my heart I walk under authority, all authority that's established in the kingdom of God, including the nation.

And I don't despise authority in any regard. Acknowledge it everywhere I go, whether it's the authority of a clerk behind the counter in a drugstore or a pastor in a small church. Whatever the situation is, I recognize the authority of God everywhere I go.

And there's such a blessing walking under that umbrella of God's authority and trusting the Lord to open it to us as a congregation. Now, please, if you'd be in prayer with me. Father, I stand before you today.

I ask you for an anointing of the Holy Spirit that I may convey this truth clearly, concisely to every heart. I pray that you deliver me from too many words and allow me to speak it simply, that every person can understand this. And I pray that you give us the grace as a church to live this.

Quicken me now, Holy Spirit, expand the borders of my mind and heart and understanding and expand the hearts of this church. God, help us to understand that you are speaking to your people in this hour. Give us the grace to hear this.

I thank you for it in Jesus' mighty name. Numbers, chapter 16, please, in the Old Testament. Understanding Spiritual Authority, part one.

Title of the message is, What is Aaron that you murmur against him? What is Aaron that you murmur against him? Now, as you're turning there, I just want to bring back to your remembrance the fact that we prayed as a church for three days and fasted. And we said, Lord, walk among the candlesticks of this church and reveal to us anything in our hearts and anything in our attitudes and behavior and conversation that is contrary to the nature of Jesus Christ. Now, you remember in Revelation, chapter two, you don't have to go there.

I'm just going to share something with you before getting into this message. Actually, probably more of a teaching than a message. But in Revelation, chapter two, there was a church called Ephesus.

And Jesus walked in the midst of the candlesticks. I believe in large measure it was by invitation. Somebody in that, whether it's John or whether it's the messengers to the churches, the pastors, they were seekers of God at that time.

And Jesus came and revealed himself and walked among the candlesticks. Now, the candlesticks are the testimonies. There are types of the testimonies that he has established in the earth.

I am a candlestick. You are a candlestick. My life is a testimony of the living reality of Christ.

And so is yours. And then, of course, we meet corporately in certain places where we're comfortable fellowshiping together. We receive some measure, at least, of spiritual instruction.

We worship God together. And our corporate gathering becomes a larger candlestick, as it is when we bring our individual candles together. It's a brighter light.

Let's put it that way. And we meet together. Now, in Ephesus, Jesus walked among the candlesticks.

And he had a lot of good things to say. This was a working church, a laboring church. This was a church that had learned the patience of God, as we heard about this morning.

A church that could not bear those who said they were evil and tried those that said they were apostles and found them out to be liars. So this is a Bible-believing church. This is a Bible-searching church.

They're looking in the Scriptures. They're digging deep. And in verse 3 of Revelation 2, he says, You've borne, and you've had patience, and for my name's sake you've labored and not fainted.

This is a church that's got a mission's heart. They're moving in the grace and mercy of God. And they're touching, perhaps, their generation.

And beyond their own borders. And there's so many good things happening in this church. But then Jesus comes to them.

He says, Nevertheless, he said, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works, or else I'll come to thee quickly and remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. And so this is an amazing thing when we realize all these good things that are in this church of Ephesus could be negated by this one issue that they were not really willing to deal with.

It's Jesus walking among them and saying, This is just one thing. But this one thing among you is sufficient to take away your testimony. Now, if there was something in your heart today that was resident there, even though you might not be aware of it.

And if I were to stand and tell you within five to ten years, your testimony is going to be gone. Would you be concerned? Would you really want to know what it is if there was something within you? Now, history tells us that the church of Ephesus at least appeared to initially embrace this word of Christ through John. But only momentarily.

They fell back into their old pattern again, and the church of Ephesus disappeared. Today you can't find any trace of the church of Ephesus. You can't even show me where the foundation of whatever building they met in might have been.

It simply disappeared from the earth. The warning of Jesus came to pass. He said, I will take your testimony and I will remove it.

There will be no candlestick. There will be no testimony. Obviously, the people did not take seriously the things that Jesus was speaking.

Now, the Lord spoke to my heart. Now, the message from Christ was to the angel of the church. And the word angel means pastor, really.

It's to the pastor of the church of Ephesus. I am the senior pastor. I'm only one of the pastoral team.

Pastor David is the founding pastor of Times Square Church. I consider him to be my spiritual authority. Now, there's a board in this church.

There's another authority. And we are all under the authority of the board of Times Square Church. Nevertheless, I am one of the pastors.

And in the capacity that I stand in this pulpit, I believe that God has spoken to me. And he's spoken to me to bring a message to this church because this is one of those one things that could affect this congregation. It could affect us collectively, perhaps in the future, and certainly individually.

Now, in the book of 1 Corinthians chapter 10, I'll just, let me again just read it to you for the sake of time, because this is really not the message. Paul says in chapter 10, verse 10, Neither murmur you as some of them murmured and were destroyed of the destroyer. In verse 11, he says, Now all these things happen to them for examples.

And they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore, let him that thinketh he stand to take heed, lest he fall. Everything, Paul says, that happened to Israel was happened, and they are examples to us.

They are types, the very things that happened to them could happen to us. And especially upon whom the ends of the world are come. If you believe that we're in the last days, certainly this would apply to us today.

And so the Holy Spirit through Paul says, If you think you stand, take heed, lest you fall. Now, Numbers chapter 16, if you're still there, beginning at verse 1. Now Korah, the son of Ishar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan, and Abiram, the sons of Eliab and Ond, the sons of Pellet, the sons of Reuben, took men. And they rose up before Moses and certain of the children of Israel.

Two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown. And they gathered themselves together against Moses, against Aaron and said to them, You take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them. And the Lord is among them.

Wherefore, then, lift you up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord. And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face and he spake to Korah and all his company, saying, Even tomorrow the Lord will show who's are his and who is holy and will cause him to come nearer to him. Even him who he has chosen will he cause to come nearer to him.

This do take you senses, Korah and all his company, and put fire therein, and put incense in them before the Lord tomorrow. And it shall be that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy. You take too much upon you, you sons of Levi.

And Moses said to Korah, Here, I pray you, you sons of Levi. Seemeth it but a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord and to stand before the congregation to minister to them. And he has brought thee near to him and all thy brethren, the sons of Levi, with thee.

And seek ye the priesthood also, for which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord. And what is Aaron that you murmur against him? That's the title of my message. What is Aaron that you murmur against him? Who is Aaron? Aaron, according to scripture, is a man with a history of failure, which no doubt everyone, including himself, is aware of.

Aaron is the man who, coming out of the wilderness, built the golden calf. Aaron is a man whom the people could persuade to move in spiritual directions that were not of God. Aaron had made gross mistakes.

He was a man of gross failure, really. If you look at what he did in the scope of his ministry, he's a man who obviously stood by grace. Aaron was a man who was placed in the congregation of Israel to supply where there was a lack.

You remember in Exodus chapter 4, verses 10 to 16, God spoke to Moses. And he told Moses, I'm going to send you in. I've heard the cry of my people, and I'm going to send you to deliver them.

And Moses said, well, I'm not eloquent of speech. And he looked in the mirror, as it was, and he saw a deficiency in himself. And the scripture tells us that Aaron was placed in the ministry, as it is, to walk alongside of Moses to fulfill a deficiency in the life of Moses.

Now, God spoke to Moses, and he said, Aaron will be your voice. You will tell him words from me, and you'll give them to Aaron, and Aaron will speak for you. And he will be to you instead of a voice, and you will be to him instead of God.

But nevertheless, he was in the body, as it is, in this congregation of Israel to supply where there was a lack. Paul says in Ephesians chapter 4, verses 15 and 16, about the church of Jesus Christ. But speaking the truth in love, that we may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

From whom, this is from Christ, the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working and the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. We are a body. We are the body of Christ on the earth.

God is the one who chooses the ministry that we are to have. We are not placed in the body by happenstance. If we are genuine, honest seekers of God, the Holy Spirit will show you exactly where Christ himself is placing you within the body.

It's an amazing thing. And when you come to realize that I'm not called to do anything more than God calls me to do. Folks, I want to tell you, there's incredible liberty in this.

When you stand before God one day and he says, well done, good and faithful servant. It's not because you preach to thousands. It's not because you had a miracle ministry.

It's not because you fulfilled some self-fulfilling destiny that you thought your life had to fulfill to be successful. It's simply that you obeyed God. He called you to do a certain thing and you just simply did it.

You did it with all your heart. You rested in it. Knowing that your reward at the end of the day is exactly the same as everyone else who has been faithful in the body of Jesus Christ to where God has placed them.

That's why it's really level ground. That's why there should be no competition in the true church of Jesus Christ. That's why I honestly feel if I was a doorkeeper, I'd be the happiest doorkeeper in the house of God.

If I had this knowledge in my heart that all I'm required to do is what God calls me to do. I don't have to do anything outside of that. I don't have to prove anything to anybody.

I just do what God calls me to do. He places me in the body. Aaron was God's choice to be where he was for the time appointed him.

Now, we just spoke on this. 1 Corinthians 12, 18 says God has set the members, every one of them in the body as it has pleased him. Aaron was separated for this purpose.

He was divinely appointed and divinely sustained. In Numbers chapter 17, verse 5, when again, in the hearts of the people, they were still challenging as it is the position of Aaron. In Numbers 17, 5, Moses

said, every man that represents one of the house of their fathers of Israel, let them take a rod which represents authority and bring that rod and we'll put it into the before the testimony.

And in verse 5, it says it shall come to pass that the man's rod whom I shall choose shall blossom. And I'll make to cease for me the murmurings of the children of Israel whereby they murmur against you. You know, folks, I want to tell you something.

When you are in the place that you should be, you blossom there, you blossom there. The fruit of the spirit begins to abound. The peace that Paul talks about when he says, I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content.

I've learned in this place to be content. You begin to blossom. And everything that God aspires as it is in his word for you to be, you begin to become because you are in that place that God has placed you.

And Moses spake to the children of Israel and every one of the princes gave him a rod piece for six for each prince. One according to their father's houses, even twelve rods in the rod of Aaron was among them. And Moses laid up the rods before the Lord in the tabernacle of the witness.

And it came to pass that on the morrow, Moses went to the tabernacle of witness and behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was butted and brought forth buds and bloomed blossoms and yielded almonds. How much that should have annoyed people who thought they were holier than this man who just said, listen, this is this guy has made so many mistakes. And others would say, look, it's fairly obvious he's just a spiritual stuff shirt that has been brought along by Moses.

Doesn't even seem to have any kind of a will or mind of his own. But yet God says, no, I put him there. You see, there was a huge deficiency in the thinking of the people and that they felt that they could take this liberty to murmur against Aaron.

I'm failing to understand that he was placed where he was by the spirit of God. And Moses brought out all the rods, verse nine, from before the Lord unto all the children of Israel. And they looked and took every man his rod.

And the Lord said to Moses, bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony to be kept for a token or a sign against the rebels. And thou shall quite take away their murmurings from me that they die not. So we look at the life of Aaron and Aaron is a man.

Yes, he's got a history of failure, just like you and I. Do you not have a history of failure here today? How would you like your life to be put up on a screen right now and all the private little things? You're those that think they're really holy. You know, you really are something at the body of Christ. I'd love just put it up on the screen.

We could just see you as God sees all of that. You know, there's a scripture that says God doesn't stay just for the church service. He follows the whole act.

He follows you home and he sees you in those private moments. And that's why David the Psalmist said, God, if you marked iniquities, who could stand? If you held our failings against us, which one of us would stand? He was called into the body to supply where there was a lack, just like you and I are. We're not placed there because we're perfect.

We're placed there because of God's grace. And it's the choice of Jesus Christ. We are set as God pleases.

We are separated, divinely appointed and divinely sustained for the purpose that God has called us to. Folks, settle it in your heart. Whatever you do in the name of Christ, whatever you do in his church, whatever part you have in the body, irrespective of your own failings and your own struggles, you are put there by God.

You are part of God's divine order. You are part of the body of Jesus Christ. And if you're aware, as I am in this house today, you know that you stand by grace.

And so it gets rid of all the holy fluff. It gets rid of all of the holier-than-thou stuff. And we all know that we stand by grace.

We're well aware that if God marked our iniquities, nobody could stand. We're here because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. And we stand and do what we do because we have an inward grace through the power of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to do what we're called to do.

Romans 13, 1 and 2, Paul says, Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. Now, I know he's talking about government in this passage of Scripture, but it has an application. It speaks about the authority that is ordained of God.

Let every soul be subject to the higher power where there is no power but of God. And the powers that be are ordained of God. I want you to think about this.

That means all the authority that you see around you is ordained of God. Every police officer on the street, even a clerk behind a drug store, who has authority, in a sense, to put out unruly persons out of the store. Security guards, government officials, people who are in authority, even outside of the church, are allowed to be there by God.

God will even use authority to chastise a nation. He will cause there to be authority that causes the people to cry out to Him. All authority is there and has been allowed of God.

It's so important to understand that God is in complete control. There's not a dictator in the world who's there of his own accord. If he's there, God, for whatever reason, has allowed him to be there.

Whosoever, therefore, resists the power. Now, of course, this has to be in context with the message that I'm going to preach next time on righteous authority and how do you respond to it. Resist the ordinance of God.

And they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. Paul, in 2 Timothy chapter 3, talks about a last day lawlessness. A lawlessness is going to virtually pervade this entire world.

And you're seeing it now. We're seeing a terrifying increase in lawlessness. I hear it.

I can hardly watch the news. Now, I go to a weight club every day. Well, it's not really a weight club because they don't do weights, but it's like one of those total fitness life cycle machines.

And it has a screen in front of it. And I look at either Fox News or CNN. I don't find either fair and balanced, by the way, no matter what they say.

But it's hard to even watch the news now because there's a scorning in people. There's a despising of all authority. There's this inward immorality that just literally oozes out of even some newscasters.

A scorning, a despising, these off-color jokes. A lawlessness against anything that is good or holy. I find it hard to even watch the news, even though I simply do, to keep up on the hurricanes and such like that are coming on a regular basis.

A last day lawlessness, Paul says, where children are going to cast off the restraint that God puts around them through their parents. There's going to be a breakdown of natural affection. That means human affection, family affection.

Just a semblance of order in the home, the family, in government, in society is going to be lost. There'll be a scorning of everyone who's in authority. You have to almost be insane to run for political office today because society just delights in taking righteous people and ripping their lives to shreds.

A loss of natural affection. There's a loss of natural decency. We see it today on the increase.

Just no fear of God to take people, good people sometimes, and just tear them apart just for the sheer pleasure of it. It speaks to something very evil in the hearts of this society. Paul said that this is going to be a generation of truce breakers and traitors.

In other words, man's word will mean nothing anymore. There'll be no sense of having any obligation to anyone but oneself. An absolute lawlessness.

Oh, folks, we see it in New Orleans when the floods and everything came. This unspeakable lawlessness that would have gotten even worse had there not been some authority there to quell it. I dread to think of what's going to happen in this society if ever there is a breakdown.

There's a lawlessness just beneath the surface just waiting to break out. There's this insane casting off of God's authority and subsequently all authority. Paul said men will be lovers of self.

In other words, they will have their own ideas, their own standards of righteousness. They will exalt themselves in their own knowledge above the knowledge of God. They'll have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof.

And one of the New Testament translations in today's language says they have a form of godliness, but they refuse to let it be a power. In other words, they have this knowledge of God, but the knowledge of God does not bring them under authority, does not bring them under the authority of God. They do not become subject to the power of God and subsequently end up with a reprobate knowledge or viewpoint of who God is.

They will not be brought under the authority of God. They will not be brought into the government of God as it is. Because God ultimately is a God of divine order.

You simply can't get around it. There's order where God is. There's order in the home.

There's order in the nation. There's order in the church. Where God is, there's order.

The universe moves in divine order. Even though man is out of order since the fall of Adam, the universe is still moving in divine order. But eventually, the scripture tells us the weight of sin that touches planet

Earth will eventually affect the universe even around it.

That's why Paul says even creation itself groans for a release from the dominion of sin, from the weight of man's rebellion against God, which brings everything out of order. We see the world out of order today. We see nature now out of order, just as the scripture says it was going to happen.

The message I'm bringing today is fairly simple. The failure to acknowledge Aaron was a failure in truth to bend the knee to God. Who is Aaron? Aaron is that person who's placed in the chain of God's order and command who will serve as a test of your heart.

That's who Aaron is. When Moses said, what is Aaron that you murmur against him? We look at the statement and we think initially that he was demeaning his own brother, but he wasn't. He was simply speaking back to the people what was in their own hearts.

Or they perhaps had a fear of standing against Moses. And maybe they had a fear in some measure of even standing against God, although they didn't see themselves as standing against God. But they had absolutely no trepidation about standing against Aaron.

After all, Aaron had failed. After all, Aaron. Who is Aaron? Moses said that you murmur against him.

He wasn't demeaning him. He was just exposing the deficiency of the people's thinking. Listen carefully in this.

In this church, in this church in New York City, there are some people who will not acknowledge what they consider to be the lowest ministry positions. There are some people who come into the church. They will not acknowledge the authority of an usher.

They will not acknowledge people who they feel to be in the lowest ministry position, and they do not see this as rebellion against God. What is Aaron that you murmur against him? I mean, who is Aaron? What's the big deal? We can stand against Aaron. We wouldn't dare stand against Pastor David or Pastor Carter or Pastor Neil or Pastor Patrick or Pastor William.

No, but I mean, an usher. I mean, what's the big deal? So they tell me I can't sit here. So I sit there.

Let them move me. Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

There are some people in this church who will not acknowledge ministry leaders. There are leaders set over. They're in the body, and they form in their minds some perceived deficiency.

You see, that's how the people could stand against Aaron and literally write him off in their hearts, because they perceive in them some deficiency. Well, maybe they've seen them lose their temper. Maybe they've made a decision once in the past that proved perhaps to be not the best decision.

So they write them off as being any part of the authority or the divine order in the house of God. And they will no longer acknowledge the ministry leader. The ministry leader gives a direction, and they will bypass them and go to an elder.

There are some people in this church body who will not acknowledge the position of elders in this church. An elder comes to them, and we have this happen all the time. And they just simply do not acknowledge the position of elder in this church, although these elders are not self-appointed.

They're not even appointed by the pastors. They were appointed by God. They're in the position they are because we prayed and said, Lord, who are the men you've appointed over the spiritual business of this church? That's how they got here in the first place.

They were not elected. They did not give us resumes. They were men who had been in this church that God identified.

And time has proven this to be God, because they are men who have been proven to be faithful. They're spiritual men. They're praying men.

And yet there are some here who will not acknowledge the ministry of an elder, but they don't see this as rebellion. Isn't it amazing? They don't see this as something that eventually can take away their candlestick. Their testimony, five, ten years down the road, can be gone because they refuse to acknowledge this one thing.

And they have this defense of, well, you know, I study the Bible, and I have a devotional life, and I go to the mission field, and I'm involved in work in the church. And so I just don't like this elder. So what's the problem? There are some people in this church who don't acknowledge the pastors.

They won't acknowledge Pastor William, so they go to Pastor Patrick. And they won't acknowledge Pastor Patrick, so they go to Pastor Neil. They won't acknowledge Pastor Neil, so they come to me.

They won't acknowledge me, so they go to Brother Dave. And then ultimately they won't acknowledge any pastors at all in the church. And they become their own authority.

There are people like that in this church. And yet they say, Jesus is Lord. And they come into the house, and they raise their hands, and they put incense in their censers and fire.

They come before the tabernacle of the congregation. Jesus, I love you. Send the fire.

How do you say Jesus is Lord, and you don't acknowledge his authority? How? Tell me, how do you get around this? The day you and I stand before the throne of God, tell me, how do you get around this? If God has planted authority in the church, and you don't acknowledge it, how do you get around it? In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul says it this way. In verse 20, he says, but now are they many members but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you.

Nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. In other words, you and I can't walk into this body. And in our heart, the first usher we meet, and maybe it's somebody we've seen a failure, a flaw.

Or we've perceived a failure, a flaw, and we say, I have no need of you. I don't need you. I don't need your position.

I don't need you in my face. I don't need your authority. I don't need what you have to say.

And Paul says, we can't say this. He said, nay, verse 22, much more, those members of the body would seem to be more feeble or necessary. Now, was not Aaron a feeble member of the body? He was.

Absolutely. He didn't seem to have the resolve to stand. But yet he was placed in the ministry, in the priesthood as it was, by God.

And he had a descendency, even, that was placed in ministry by God. Even though his ministry in life appeared to be feeble, it didn't rescind the ministry that God had given to him. And those members of the body, verse 23, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor.

And our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. And the question we have to ask ourselves is, do we obey this? Do we obey, do we bestow honor on those parts of the body which we think are less honorable than others? It doesn't mean they are, folks. But sometimes we just think they are.

And do we obey this? Now, back in Numbers chapter 16 and verse 17. Now we see them stand with censures in hand, justified in their own hearts in their disregard of God's authority. It says in Numbers 16, 17, And take every man his censure, and put incense in them, and bring ye before the Lord every man his censure.

Two hundred and fifty censures, thou also and Aaron, every one of you his censure. And they took every man his censure, and put fire in them, and laid incense thereon, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron. Now I want you to see the picture.

Two hundred and fifty. And these are men of renown. These are people that have somewhat of a reputation for godliness, as it is.

And here they are standing. It's a type of prayer and worship. And they're standing before God.

But in their heart they have a despising of God's authority. And in Numbers chapter 16, and verse 35, tells us, And there came out a fire from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense. And the Lord spake to Moses, saying, Speak to Eliezer the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censures out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder, for they are hallowed.

And the censures of these sinners against their own souls. Let them make them broad plates for a covering of the altar. For they offered them before the Lord, therefore they are hallowed.

And they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel. And Eliezer the priest took the brazen censures wherewith they that were burnt had offered. And they were made broad plates for a covering of the altar, to be a memorial unto the children of Israel.

That no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the Lord, that he be not as Korah and as his company, as the Lord said to him by the hand of Moses. Now the Lord said, melt down their censures, and cover the altar as a remembrance. And let the people, when they come to the altar, and they see this golden covering as it is on the altar, let them remember that 250 people have come before them, who stood in their arrogant pride against God's divine order, and God's divine authority in His church, and because of it they were burned.

And take it, and put it on the altar as a memorial. Melt it down as it is. And I see this as a type of when the pen as it is, is in the hands of those who wrote the scriptures, and the ink is flowing through the pen, and it's in effect melting down.

And it's being written on this altar, which we call the word of God, as a remembrance to us of the things that happened to those that have gone before us. So that we'll not stand in our arrogance. We'll not be a generation that comes after this generation of Moses, who stand in our arrogance in the house of God, and say, Lord, we love you.

We despise your authority, but we love you. We despise and we don't esteem your body. And we don't think it's anything to stand against Aaron.

I mean, who is Aaron that you murmur against him? What does it matter that we stand against this deficient, frail man, or this deficient, frail woman? And so what if we despise or disregard his authority? So what if we want to take to ourselves the place that God has uniquely given him? And we want to become our own standard of authority. And we don't want to recognize the positions in the body of Christ. So God, surely you don't have a problem with this.

But the Lord says, no, and I have melted it down, and I've put it on the altar. I've written it in the pages of Scripture, so that we don't fall into the same error. Now, there are people here today who would say, oh, pastor, but wait, that's Old Testament.

Men don't burn today. They don't burn today. But I beg to differ with you.

Turn to Romans chapter 1. I'm going to show you that men do burn today. They do. And people think that, oh, no, no, no, no, no.

The fire of God came out and burned them. And this is all Old Testament. This is Old Testament God.

But people don't burn today. Romans chapter 1, verse 21. I'm going to prove to you that they do burn.

Because that, verse 21, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, and neither were thankful. But they became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened. In other words, there was a knowledge of God, but they chose not to be brought under the submission of God as it is.

They didn't glorify Him. But their imaginations became void, and their hearts became darkened. Verse 22 says, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like the corruptible man and to birds and to four-footed beasts and creeping things. Now, the very first thing that happens when we will not acknowledge the divine order of God is we developed a false and corrupted image of who God is. Remember Psalm 50.

The Lord says, you stand in slander and speak against your own brother, and you thought that I was altogether like you were. A corrupted image of God comes into the minds of those who do not recognize God's authority. Wherefore, verse 24, it says, God gave them up to uncleanness, to the lust of their own heart, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves.

Who changed the truth of God, verse 25, into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature. That's man more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this cause, verse 26, God gave them up to vile affections. For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature. In other words, God says, yes, you will not acknowledge my presence.

You will not acknowledge the authority. You will not come under the authority. So I'm not only giving you, I'm releasing you to a corrupted image of God, but I'm also releasing you to vile affections.

And likewise, also the men leaving the natural use of the woman burned. You see that in your Bible? In their lust, one towards another. Men with men working that which is unseemly and receiving in themselves the recompense of their error, which was meat.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, verse 28, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which were not convenient. And the reprobate mind in the original text means a mind that's empty of judgment. A corrupted image of God being released to ungodly affections.

Moving to and beginning to love things that God calls evil and even calling them good. Burning in their lust. Is this not a generation of burning lust? It's a generation of burning lust even in the church of Jesus Christ.

A pastor that I heard of one time was preaching revival and he said that you wouldn't believe the number of people in the Christian church who are battling with out-of-control passion. The number that are hooked on internet pornography. Whose minds are being given to filth and they cannot seemingly get away from it.

Minds that are empty of the knowledge of God's justice. The question that we ask ourselves, are you a resistor of authority? And did you ever think that your struggle might be in direct proportion to your response to authority? Did you ever think that you might be battling this raging lust inside of you? That you might be battling even with an understanding of who really is God? You're traveling the circuit of Christian confusion that exists today. The think and feel prophets and all these theories about God.

All these corrupted images of God. Do you ever stop and think it might just be a problem with authority? It might just be that this is such a rebellious generation. Such a rebellious time.

And we have brought such a measure of this into the house of God and not yet been willing to call it what it is. This is a generation that is absolutely justified in its rebellion. We live in New York, an in-your-face society.

Which is really just rebellion. Everybody rebels against everybody and everything. Get out of my face, get out of my life, get out of my space.

It's really just rebellion. And then we bring it into the house of God. The usher comes and says, good morning, would you like to sit here? Get out of my face, get out of my sight.

We might not say it but it's in our heart. And we think that there's no problem with this with God. But yet we have trouble finding out who really God is.

We are always confused. We are always fighting these vile affections and these drawings to this world of the sensory. We seem to have minds that are empty of judgment.

Unable to comprehend the severity of disobedience to God. Unable to walk in the fear of God. And then subsequently burning in this insatiable lust.

And it's really a problem with authority. We go to counselors, we go to Pastor Neil, we go to the counseling ministry. And we want to talk, talk, talk, talk our problems out.

Looking for a magical word, a mystical formula that is going to set us free from all the inner turmoil. Not thinking, it just might not be a problem with lust, it's a problem with authority. Lust is the burning.

Because we're coming into the presence of God and saying, I love you Lord. You're the Lord of my life. And the fire comes out from God.

And we head out of the house and find that there's no victory. This burning, this continual burning is within us. And we can't seem to get out of the fire.

It's very simple. If Jesus is Lord, then it's non-negotiable that we must bend our knee to his authority. I personally want to be and have learned in my life the purpose of God's authority.

And I want to be all of my life a respecter of God's authority. Everywhere I go I find there's peace in that. If I'm in a line and somebody says, sorry, the line is closed, then the line is closed.

I don't have to get in a knot about it, I just go to the next one. You find when you're not willing to walk under authority, you're always angry throughout the day. Always fighting for your rights.

Always mad at somebody. Can't go through the day. The boss says, I want you to work till 12.15 and not take your lunch at 12 today.

And you sit down and you could bust your pencil until you're so mad. And it's just about authority. If he says work till 12.15, work till 12.15. Now, I'd like you to believe that I arrived at this peaceableness just overnight by saying a prayer.

But it didn't happen that way. I took probably an eighth of an inch off of my teeth from grinding them at times. And it's not always been easy.

But all my life the Lord has been teaching me about authority. That's why he took me into the police department when I really didn't intend on going there. I was really just passing by.

I saw an ad in the window and thought, well, this would be interesting. Three weeks later, my hair was cut. I had hair down on my shoulders when I applied to the police department.

Three weeks later, my hair is cut and I'm standing at attention and somebody is this far from my face yelling at me. Stepping on my boots and everything else that they would do in police college. Because I had to learn about authority.

That was basic Bible I was learning. I didn't know it at the time. Learning about authority.

Learning about the purpose of authority. If you have an army and there's no authority, you have no victory. There is no victory.

There can be no victory. Soldiers will be all over the field and they'll get slaughtered. And I believe that a lot of the Christian church is getting slaughtered in our generation because they fail to understand the purpose of God's authority.

I was in Siberia, I guess about a year or so ago, a year and a half ago. And had the privilege of conducting the first ever outdoor crusade in Novo Kuznetsk in Siberia. And I remember the police officers and soldiers and such like virtually surrounded this town square.

There was maybe about 3000 people or so, I'm told, that came out. But there was a lot of soldiers and they surrounded the square and they were very, very intimidating. And, of course, I knew in my heart the

purpose that they were there was to intimidate the people there.

The government was very afraid of free expression of worship. If I was a despiser of authority, I would have scorned them. But I got up and began to speak.

And I said to the soldiers from an honest heart, I'm very thankful that you're here today. I'm very thankful that we can meet here and worship God and we are protected and that you are our protectors. And then I said, oh, by the way, I used to be a police officer.

I started to speak to them. I said, I want to tell you, you don't have to be angry any longer. You don't have to go home and drink.

You don't have to beat your wives. I began to speak to every soldier that was on that field and all of the police officers to the exclusion of the crowd, really. And my surprise is I began to speak to them.

They began to leave the field. By the time I was done speaking the message on the prodigal son, there was not a police officer in sight. And when it was over, I was a bit confused.

And I asked some people, I said, where did the police and all the military people go? And he told me, he says, they were ashamed because they began to weep. And they were hiding in cars and behind buildings and they didn't want to be seen crying publicly. I believe that if I had been a scorner of authority, I would have had no power to speak into their hearts.

I feel today that in the church of Jesus Christ, many people have no authority to speak into people's hearts because they're scornors of authority. Not realizing the effect that happens, that there is no ability because we're not under God's authority. And subsequently we are left with our deficient image of God trying to speak into men's hearts and we have no spiritual authority.

We've seen the Lord come down in foreign fields and do miraculous things. Those of us who are in Nigeria, those of us who are in Jamaica and Zambia, we've seen the miraculous now. We've seen God do what only he can do.

And I believe in great measure it's because the vessels he sent, the choir, the workers, those that gave testimony, those that spoke the word of God were under authority. Because they were under authority, there wasn't authority in them. God backed his word, brought down the powers of darkness and the kingdom of God came with great power.

If you and I want the ability to speak, and that's what the candlestick is all about, if we want the ability to speak into the hearts of men in our generation, we have to be under God's authority. There's no other way. This issue, I believe, is an issue that could take away our candlestick.

If we don't learn in this rebellious generation to be under the authority of God, we will have no testimony. We'll have words and we'll have distorted views of God, but we'll have no authority. The Church of Ephesus didn't take the warning seriously.

And it didn't produce in them a change of behavior. And they lost the candlestick. But I've determined in my heart that I'm never going to lose my candlestick.

I want to be a testimony of Christ until the day he returns. And I'm determined in my heart that this church will not lose its candlestick. That Times Square Church will stand, that this will never be a nominal place of

spiritual deficiency.

It's better that God close the doors than that ever happen here. And I hope that you are determined today. I hope with all my heart that you are determined that you will never lose your candlestick.

I pray today that the Holy Spirit give you the grace to say, if you need to, I struggle with authority. God, you have to help me. You have to open my heart.

I speak now to people who you've heard part of your life preached in this message and you've not even considered it might be an issue of authority, confusion, passion, besetting things you can't get free from. You never even considered that it might be an authority issue. It takes great grace to walk under authority.

But the good news is that great grace is ours through Jesus Christ. We can walk under authority. We can do it joyfully.

Now you're going to hear in the next message. It doesn't mean that we get ourselves in a situation of abusive authority. There is a procedure to deal with that.

There's a safeguard of understanding in the word of God. You don't ever have to come under abusive or controlling authority. Authority is voluntary.

I choose to walk under authority. I don't have to. I choose to.

Because it's the right thing to do. But that walking under authority does not take away my mind and the guidance of the Scriptures and truth that guides me. And there's a procedure for dealing with this.

And by the time we get to the third message, if you don't have a shout of glory in your heart, then you've missed something. We've got to go back to the start again. Because you're going to find an inseparable link between authority and faith.

Would you stand, please, with me? Hallelujah. If the Holy Spirit has spoken to you in the Education Annex, we'll wait for you here in the main sanctuary. There's just a few of you.

You can make your way down here to the balcony. You can go to either exit and make your way to this altar in the main sanctuary. Just say, Pastor, the Holy Spirit has spoken to me.

I want to be a person under authority. I want to know what that means. I want to walk under authority.

I want to be free from the things that have come into my life. And today I see that there's been a despising in my heart of authority. It's been part of my life.

I don't want this to be in my life anymore. I want insight into the hearts of men. I want authority in my witness as a Christian.

God, you've got to help me in this. If you can be honest in this today, I want to open this altar. As Greg leads us in the song, Make Your Way Here, Please.

And we're going to just pray together and ask God to help us to walk under authority. It's as simple as that. If the Holy Spirit is calling you, slip out of your seat, make your way here.

We're going to pray. Completely your choice. It's voluntary whether you come or whether you don't.

It's absolutely voluntary. But you say, Pastor, I hear something. I want to walk under authority.

If I'm speeding and a policeman stops me, I don't want to argue or lie. I want to accept the justice. I want to pay my taxes.

Because God has an authority in government. I want to recognize the authority that God has placed in my apartment building. There's a janitor.

He has authority. I want to recognize the authority in my home. Wives, you need to recognize the authority of your husband and children, of your parents.

Husbands, you need to recognize the authority of God in your marriage. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Make your way here. I do believe this will be a liberating time for those who respond. Hallelujah.

Now, I know that there are people at this altar that have had a problem with authority because it was abused over your life. And I want to tell you that the kingdom of God in its rightful balance, you will never suffer abuse at the hands of God. You can trust him.

And you're going to see as this teaching unfolds that there is a procedure to protect you. And you never have to be the victim of abuse of authority again, especially in the house of God. There's a check and balance system.

There's truth of Scripture to guide you. And I know it's hard sometimes to see these things and to be released one more time and to trust. But if you'll trust God, he will never fail you.

He will never fail you. And you're going to find a joy after this day. You walk in and the usher says, and I say usher because that's pretty usually your first authority.

And your response to the usher determines what kind of a day you're going to have in the house of God. And you say, I'm sorry, you can't sit here today. And to be able to walk away joyfully, that's the victory.

Walking away as a start, but joyfully is the victory. And that's where the Lord will take you to say, I'm under authority. Thank you, Lord.

Thank you for this test today of my heart. Thank you, Jesus. And every every in every situation, you'll find that God will test it.

And eventually you get free and you don't walk around in this not looking for your rights all the time. It's so freeing. I can't even begin to describe it.

It's just it's freeing. Absolutely. I remember going to speak at a young pastor's church on my holidays.

He had a church of about, you know, 12 people. And I asked him, how long do you want me to speak for? He knows I come from a church and he was shocked that I would even ask him. And I said, because you're the authority here.

If you say 30 minutes, then I'm finished in 30 minutes. You say 25, I'm done in 25. I walk under authority.

I remember how shocked he was at that. At least he looked shocked and maybe he wasn't, but he looked. Hallelujah.

Lord, we would not lose our candlestick. We don't want to lose our testimony. We don't want to make the mistake of Ephesus.

We have asked for you to come and you have. You're walking in the candlesticks of Times Square Church. You're speaking to us about the one things in us that could take the testimony that you desire to have in us.

God, help us to acknowledge authority and to joyfully walk under authority as much as is possible to do so. Help us, God. Help us when authority is unreasonable to respond appropriately.

Help us, God, in the workplace. Help us, Lord, with elected officials. Help us, God.

Lord, you said, let every soul be subject to the higher powers. And you were speaking about government. Help us, Lord, in these things to obey the laws of the land, the ones that do not contradict the word of God.

Help us in this. Father, help us in our homes not to defy the authority that you have established. You have divine authority.

You set things in their proper order. Help us not to defy that order. God, help us in the house of the Lord to come in and to acknowledge every ministry, everyone that you placed in the body.

Don't let us have a despising in our heart because we perceive some deficiency. Lord, that means only that we're blind to our own deficiencies. God, help us.

Help us, Lord, to walk under authority. Lord, we don't want to lose our candlestick. And we want to have authority to speak into the hearts of men in this generation.

Help us, Father. Lead us, oh God, to an understanding of balanced authority. And show us, show us, Jesus.

Show us the link, the inseparable link between authority and faith. Lord, we are going to see this in the scriptures. Show it to us.

Oh, God, I praise you. I bless you. I know that there's no miracle prayer for this.

It's an issue of the heart. It's something that has to come into the heart. You have to do it, Holy Spirit, in every person that's gathered at this altar and in this house.

It's something, Lord, that you have to do in us. All we can do is come to you and say, Lord, I just yield to it and I ask you to do it. You have to form something in me that may not even be there.

You have to give me an attitude of heart that I may have never possessed since I was a child. Lord God, you've got to do this. I pray for this church that you do this.

You make us a church that walks under authority. Lord, let there be nobody in this house that can say to another part of the body, I have no need of you. Lord God, we have need of every part of the body, everyone that you've placed in every ministry.

We have need of this. I pray that you challenge and convict the authority jumpers in this church that refuse to acknowledge positions of ministry. I pray, God, that you challenge this, Holy Spirit.

Challenge it. Don't let them begin to burn in their unbridled passions. Stop the burning before it starts, O God.

Stop the distorted view of who you are. Let there be a clear view of Jesus Christ from heaven in every heart, every life. O God, we need a testimony in this last hour of time.

We need a testimony in this city. We need a testimony for the sake of your name among your house and your own people. O Jesus, we need a testimony.

Help us, God. Help us. Help every one of our poor hearts.

God, to walk under authority. Your divine authority. Help us to acknowledge every ministry in the house of God.

O Jesus, O Jesus, take out of us spiritual arrogance that would cause us to stand before you with our senses and our records of faithfulness, not realizing our rebellion. Help us, God, in this thing. Help us, Jesus, not to do this.

Help us to learn from the mistakes of those who have gone before us. O Jesus, let us not be blind and deaf and dumb, O God, as so many were and have been throughout history. They failed and refused to learn the lessons of history.

Help us to see it. Help us to embrace it. Help us to walk in it.

And God, give us authority in this generation. We thank you, Lord. I've seen in your scriptures that those who walk under authority are given authority.

O Jesus, we want spiritual authority in our homes and among our families. We want spiritual authority in our neighborhoods. Spiritual authority in the workplace.

Help us, God, to walk under authority, that authority may be given to us. A different authority, a higher authority. Father, we thank you for this from the depths of our heart.

We give you praise and glory. God, we have to believe you're doing a miracle today. We have to believe.

I pray now that those who have come and are battling with unbridled lust, as they begin to walk under authority, I pray you confirm this message by releasing them from these passions, releasing them from the grip of evil, releasing them, O God, from the struggles and trials of their flesh, and bringing them into a new awareness of who you are. Let grace and glory abound in every mind and in every heart. I thank you for this from the depths of my heart.

In Jesus' name. Now let's just give him praise and thank him for his goodness.

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