

Understanding Spiritual Authority (Part 3): The Greatest Faith in Israel

by Carter Conlon

Carter Conlon's sermon explores the vital connection between spiritual authority and faith, urging believers to submit to God's word for true transformation.

Duration: 48:23

Scripture: Genesis 1:3, Proverbs 31:28, Jonah 2:8, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 22:29, John 1:11, 2 Peter 1:4

Topics: "Spiritual Authority"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of the Passover in Egypt and draws parallels to the present generation. He emphasizes the importance of obeying God's instructions and coming under the authority of His word. By applying the blood of the lamb to their doorposts and having family devotions centered around God's truth, the children of Israel were saved from the spirit of death. The preacher also highlights the significance of recognizing Jesus' presence and power among His people, and the need to yield to His authority and the authority of the scriptures.

Transcript

When I began the series of messages on spiritual authority, the Holy Spirit spoke something very clearly to my heart, and I shared it with you, I believe, that first Sunday, perhaps I think it was Sunday at three o'clock, that we had prayed for cleansing. We had fasted as a church, and we'd said, Lord, let the words of our mouth, the meditation of our heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, our strength, my strength and my Redeemer. And the Holy Spirit gave us an understanding that when we call out to Christ, he will walk among the candlesticks or the testimony of his own church that he has established, his own people, and just the manifestation of his presence and his truth will be what proves and reprove that church.

The Church of Ephesus had this manifestation of Christ walking in the candlestick of its testimony, and it was a church that was doing a lot of really good things. They were testing theology, and they were working and doing in the name of God. They were laboring and not fainting.

And when you read the first account of this particular church in Revelation chapter 2, they were doing some wonderful things. But he said, nevertheless, I have somewhat against you. And in this case, they had lost their first love.

They'd left their first love. And he said, if you don't come back to this, you're going to lose your whole testimony. You're going to lose the candlestick.

And we know that historically Ephesus lost its candlestick. There was a momentary, historians say, embracing of this admonition that came from Christ to the Apostle John, but eventually it just drifted away. They let it fall through their fingers.

They lost their first love. And there's no historical evidence, really, other than the testimony of Scripture, that that church ever existed. It's an incredible tragedy.

The Lord gave them a word, but they were not able to hear it. The Holy Spirit spoke to me that this series of messages on spiritual authority is one of those somewhat things for this generation. Not just this church, but this generation.

It's a very, very rebellious generation. Rebellion seems to have permeated society all around us. And we're seeing this lawlessness that Paul speaks about increasing virtually every day now.

It's difficult even to watch the news. I don't know how you feel, but for me it's difficult even to watch the scolding and the sexual double talk that you find even in news media now. And there's this constant lawlessness and rebellion that is going to culminate in an absolute disregard of the laws of God, an absolute rebellion that is almost unthinkable in this final generation.

I wonder today if we're not seeing a measure of this lawlessness that the Bible speaks about, this absolute horrific outbreak of lawlessness coupled with tumult in the weather and certain things around the earth that will cause men's hearts to fail them. And the ambassadors of peace, one of the Old Testament prophets says, will weep bitterly in that day. All of the human effort to bring about divine order, while at the same time excluding the authority of God, is going to leave this world in chaos.

And folks, that's the issue. We can have all of the good intentions that we want, even as Christians, but if we're not willing to be under the divine order of God, then ultimately we're going to end up in a ruin. Just like every other person who ever attempted, and just like a world that's attempting to bring itself into order, but they're not under the authority of God.

Now, the first message we talked about spiritual authority, you remember it was called, who is Aaron, that you murmur against him. Talked about how authority is established in the body by God sitting in his church, various offices. And your response to authority regarding those offices in the church is not so much how you respond to Pastor David or myself or some of the other pastors or the elders of this church, but it's the first line of authority that you meet when you walk in Sunday morning.

It's the yellow jacketed usher. And that person really determines whether or not you are under authority. You cannot circumvent God's order and say I'm under authority.

And folks, it just simply doesn't work that way. I'm sorry. It would be nice if it did, but it doesn't work that way.

We're either under authority or we're not under authority in the house of God. Spoke recently on the purpose and limits of authority. What is a righteous authority? What is an unrighteous authority? How do you identify them? What do you do when righteous authority becomes questionable or unjust? What is the recourse of petition as it is when you feel that you've been wrongly treated? And we dealt with that.

And today I want to talk about the inseparable link between authority and faith. Now, you would never, ever think that being under authority opens your eyes to spiritual truth and brings you into a dimension of faith. But I know it from personal experience that being under authority opens your eyes to a realm of Christ and a realm of faith that those who don't come under authority never understand.

They always learn, but are not coming to the knowledge of what that truth and where that truth should be taking them. A person can be in Bible school all of their life. They can study the scripture.

They can be a student of theology and yet never really have eyes of faith, ending up with more questions than answers. And the reality is, and I believe that I've seen this and I believe that I can show it to you clearly from the scriptures today, that there is an inseparable link between being under authority and having eyes of faith. I pray God give you and I both the grace to see this and respond to it today.

Now, Father, I ask you to anoint me with the Holy Spirit. I ask you, God, to give me the ability to very clearly and concisely convey this truth. I pray for a weightiness to the word today that no hearer in this house or in the days ahead could simply brush this aside.

It would either have to be accepted or rejected, but in any measure it has to be dealt with. I pray in my own heart that you cause me to have to deal with any area that is not under your authority. Lord, I have to trust you to show it to me and to grant me the grace to bend my knee and to one more time declare that you are my Lord.

God, help us in the coming days. Father, I see a lawlessness sweeping the whole earth. I see a lawlessness sweeping this city.

I see very difficult days ahead. And God, a people who are not under authority are going to be swept away in the flood. I pray that you show us the principles of spiritual authority and help us to get under that authority.

God, help us to put away a rebellious heart and a rebellious nature and all of the spiritual justifications for not obeying your truth. God, I pray that you turn these tables over and throw these goats out of the house of God. All of these things in the heart that we have embraced that are not in allegiance with truth, they offend the nature of Christ.

I pray, God, overturn them. Holy Spirit, you have to do this. We're inviting you to do this.

We say today, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. We open our hearts and we ask you, God, for truth that can set us free. You said you should know the truth.

The truth will set you free. Let there be an embracing in every heart today. In this church, I pray for Times Square Church today, that there be an embracing of this truth that we're about to hear.

God Almighty, that we can come under authority, heaven's authority, and that we would have eyes of faith to face the coming storms and the coming days. Oh, God, Father, I thank you for this in Jesus' mighty name. Matthew chapter eight, please.

I'm going to speak about the greatest faith in Israel. The greatest faith in Israel, Matthew chapter eight, and we're going to begin reading at verse five. And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came to him a centurion beseeching him, saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home, sick of the palsy, grievously

tormented.

And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. Verse eight, Matthew chapter eight. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I'm not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this man, go, and he goeth. And to another, come, and he cometh.

And to my servant, do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marveled and said to them that followed, verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith. No, not in Israel.

And verse 13 says, And Jesus said to the centurion, Go thy way, as thou hast believed, so it be done unto thee. And his servant was healed in that selfsame hour. Now in this passage of scripture, Jesus is walking among his own people.

This is a people who are set apart for the glory of God. Like you and I do today in some measure, these people have a history. They have walked with God.

They know in measure at least the things of God. They have the stories that were passed on to them, in some cases from their parents. And if not from their parents, at least from those that are teaching them the truth and the authenticity of their history and their scriptures.

They have a heritage. Many of them are not new to the things of God. They have had parents that obeyed the admonition of God in Deuteronomy, where he spoke to the people through Moses and said, When you are walking by the way, speak these truths to your children.

And when you are lying down, speak these truths to your children and tell them how God delivered you out of darkness and tell them how when you obeyed the instruction of God and you put the blood on the doorpost and you ate the lamb within your house and you ate the bitter with the sweet, tell them how the angel of death passed over and God with a mighty hand brought you out. Give them the stories. Let them have the stories.

Just like many of us have heard these stories. They have been passed on to us by those that have walked ahead of us. And they have relayed the stories.

That's why even as I speak it today, most of you are not strangers to these stories. And most of you are not strangers either to the personal experience of having been brought out of darkness by the power of God. You sit here today and you say, Yes, of course, I'm not everything I desire to be, but I'm not what I used to be.

God brought me out of great darkness. And I also have a history and I have a heritage. These people had a knowledge of the scriptures and they knew these scriptures were the word of God.

These were not just idle words penned by some people who had nothing better to do with their time. They knew that these were inspired words given to inspired leadership, inspired by the Holy Spirit himself. And they knew that these words that were written down had the force and authority of God behind them.

The same God that said, Let there be light, gave by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, these scriptures and the words written down when we walk in faith and obedience to God, have the same force of authority as the

voice that said, Let there be light and light was and divided light from darkness and created things just by his spoken word. The same God whom the scripture says calls things that are not as if they are. Nothing might be there in this particular corner of your life.

But when you go into the promises of God, walking under the authority of God, and you begin to believe what God has spoken into your life, there may be nothing there. There may be no ability to forgive. There may be no ability to understand certain things.

There may be no ability to go forward even in certain areas of your life. But as you get into the Holy Scriptures and believe God, that spoken word that is written down on these pages has the same force of authority as the God said, who said, Let there be light. You wake up one morning and all of a sudden something has dawned in your heart that wasn't there before.

And you begin to grow by this inward working of God's grace and this empowerment of the Holy Spirit within you. Peter said in 2nd Peter, chapter one and verse four, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature. Not just promises that we're going to get through as wonderful as those are, but God says, No, I'm going to intertwine my nature with yours.

And the two of us are going to walk together in agreement and you are going to be recreated from the inside out. You're going to become a new creation. You might be a certain type of person now, but as we walk together and as you yield to my authority and the authority of scriptures, you believe it in your heart.

Five years from now, you're going to look back. You'll see an old picture in an album. Have any of you ever seen those old pictures and say, Who was that person anyway? That person is dead.

I've got some old pictures that would shock you by putting them up. Just the hardness that was in my face. I look at these old pictures and I look at them with thanksgiving, say, I don't know who that man was, but he is dead and a new man by the power of God has risen out of the ashes.

With all of this, Jesus is walking among his people. The God who created the universe has finally come down in human form and he's walking among his people with the history, the heritage, the scriptures, just like Jesus walks the aisles of every church that cries out for his name and for his testimony to be established in their midst. Yet so few were able to recognize his presence or his power.

So few, so much confusion, so many people with opinions, so many thoughts in people's minds about, is this God? Is this not God? Is this the righteous man? Is this an unrighteous man? Can he really do this? Can he do that? Walking with him. Could you imagine walking so close to God that you're able to reach out and touch him and physically touch him, yet still can't recognize his presence or his power? And you see all of God's people around him like this until a stranger steps into their midst and utters words of confidence in the power of Christ that Jesus himself marvels at. And he said, I'm not worthy that you should come under my roof, only speak the word and my servant shall be healed.

And when Jesus heard it, he marveled. And if you look at the original text, it was like, it was like he was startled. It was like he, now we know that God doesn't get taken by surprise, but it was as if this inward joy, this inward startledness hit him because here is a Roman centurion.

He's not part of the household of faith. He's not part of those who are sitting under the scriptures and have the history and the heritage. And he's got a faith that is far surpassing anything that he's ever found in

Israel.

It's as if a man came in here today or a woman came in here today and was one hour saved. And all of a sudden said, I believe and stood up and some great miracle happened. I believe God just as it was told me, so shall it be.

And the rest of us are sitting here with all of our scriptural knowledge, all of our study and all of our heritage and all of our history. And some new guy walks in and gets the miracle. And Jesus marvels at this.

And he said, I have not found so great a faith. No, not in Israel, not in all of Israel. We know that Jesus Christ is not given to extreme statement.

He said, I've not found this kind of faith anywhere among my own people. Now, why did God's own people not have such faith? John one eleven says he came to his own and his own received him not. Now, ultimately, with all of their religious experience, they had removed themselves from under the authority of God.

It's obvious they were not under the authority of scriptures. Matthew twenty two twenty nine. He was in discussing issues with his own people, especially those who were supposed to be leading and teaching the people about the power of God.

He said, you do err not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. He said, you you neither have come under the authority of scripture and neither do you know the power of God that emanates from those the mind, the lives in the lives of those who are under that authority. John five thirty eight thirty nine.

He said, you have not his word abiding in you for whom he has sent him. You believe not. And then he said, search the scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life and they are they which testify of me.

Here are people who are studying scripture, but they're not under the authority of scriptures. They don't consider this the governing authority of their lives. I wonder how many people today study the Bible just because it's interesting to be able to have some more knowledge or interesting just be able to win an argument with somebody out there who's of another persuasion.

Interesting just because it's a curious thing to walk with God. It's we have a natural curiosity and it's interesting to know what it is that God says. But in reality, so many people are learning but not brought under the authority of what they're learning.

Do not consider the words of this book, the absolute authority over their lives. What God says is what God means. What God speaks is the truth.

He says, you'll know the truth and the truth shall set you free. But it's an embracing, not just a head knowledge. It's a heart embracing of that truth.

Paul speaking about Jesus Christ, he said of God, Christ is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. In other words, Paul is saying this authority of scripture leads us to the full life of Jesus Christ. This is how do we grow? We don't grow by experiential Christianity, folks, and much of the Christian world is trying to do that.

You don't grow that way. You can run all over the globe looking for some marvelous man or woman of God who could lay their hand on your forehead and knock you on the carpet. And that's all that happens.

Your forehead gets touched and you fall on the carpet. You don't really grow in grace, folks. You grow in grace when you and I come under the authority of the word of God, when the authority of God's word becomes the authority over our lives.

And so many today have no hope in heaven and no faith and no power because they will not submit to the authority of scripture. Folks, we wouldn't have to waste half of our time counseling that we do if people would simply submit to the authority of scripture. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church.

That would settle half of the marriage struggles that are going on in this congregation. Then I won't bother going to the other half because I know I'm going to run into a... They substitute clear instruction for the thoughts and the traditions of men. Go ahead to Matthew chapter 15, please, if you will.

Substituting instruction for thoughts and traditions. Matthew chapter 15, verse three. But he answered and said to them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and thy mother, and he that curses father or mother, let him die to death.

But you say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus you have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Another translation says you've invalidated the commandment of God by your tradition.

Now, what have we invalidated? Now think about this. I'm speaking in the context of being under the authority of scripture, of knowing the power of God, of receiving this life that God the Father has for those who come to Christ and walk under his authority. Now, Paul says in Ephesians chapter six, verses two and three, Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise.

Now here's the promise, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. That's incredible. I remember the first time I read that and I had a choice to make.

Now, I either do this in obedience to God, and if I do this in obedience to God, God says it will be well with me and I will live long on the earth. You know, I will have a full life. I will have a good life.

If I do this one thing, it's a commandment with a promise. And now you see where people took this clear commandment and substituted it with a tradition. Another form of thought that is sort of godly.

We sort of obey. We sort of come under the authority. It's like being sort of pregnant, folks, if you'll forgive the expression.

It just doesn't happen. You are or you are not under the authority of scripture. And he says, honor your father and your mother, which is the first commandment with promise that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth.

And it's amazing how people will take this authority of scripture and it will substitute another way of thinking instead of obeying it. Well, I would obey it or I will partially obey it or I will obey it this way. And Jesus said you invalidate this commandment.

You invalidate the effect of the commandment. Let's put it that way. You rob yourself of the promise that it will be well with you and you will live long on the earth because you've removed yourself from under the authority of scripture.

It's amazing when we begin to see it. You are you are walking out from a very clear directive of God. Honor your father and your mother.

It doesn't say if they deserve it. It doesn't say if they've been the best parents on the earth. It doesn't say if if only they vote, they vote, if they've if they've if they've not deserted you or they've they've only spoken good words over your life.

It Jesus just said, honor your father and your mother. Now, we either come under that authority or we don't. We have a choice to make.

And if we do come under that authority, the scripture says it shall be well with you and you will live long on the earth. It will go well with you. There will be an infusion, as it is, of God's life into your own life and into your circumstances around you.

It will go well with you. In some measure, you will reap what you have sown. Your own children in the long run perhaps will rise up and call you blessed, as the scripture says, of the virtuous woman.

I think of the prophet Jonah in chapter two, verse eight, who, after this long time of justifying disobedience to God and going through all the turmoil that he went through. He said, they that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. Those that pursue these illusory paths of so called obedience, but there's really no obedience in it and they're not truly under the authority of scripture.

It's amazing. It's amazing how many people today are not under the authority of scripture, but say, yes, Jesus is my Lord. How do we reconcile the two? I'm not a very good counselor because I have very little patience with this type of thing.

When people come in and I see what the scripture says and I always assume that people want to do like I do. I always assume when they see it, they'll want to obey it. Oh, I didn't see that.

I'm walking in disobedience to God and you open the scriptures and read just simply a passage. I'm not into the latest techniques, the psychological techniques. Thank God.

I don't know any of them. I simply just know what God's word says. I know where healing came into my own home, my own marriage and my own mind and my own life.

It came from taking this as the absolute authority of God, believing it and trusting him for the strength to walk in obedience to what God says. And you turn to the scriptures and they look at it and they say, well, that's just your opinion. Well, that's interesting.

But however, and they offer a tradition and the tradition is something we create out of our own mind, which is not in submission to the authority of God. A tradition is an excuse for not really obeying God. That's really all it is.

And ultimately they end up in a constant argument with God. You find God's own people arguing with God. Find people coming in for counseling and really all they're doing is arguing with God.

God has very clearly given them the answer, but they don't want to obey it. They don't want to pay their income tax. They don't want to be honest in their dealings with their neighbor.

They really don't want to forgive somebody who has wronged them. They don't want to obey God. The husbands don't want to love their wives as Christ loved the church.

Wives don't want to submit to their husbands as God says that they should. Children don't want to obey their parents. There's this stubbornness in the hearts of men who do not want to come under the authority of God.

And so they end up robbing themselves of the very blessing and the power of God that God wants to give those who will walk under divine authority. How do we escape this? How do we get around it? We live in a such a sin sick world and we live in a pathetic in some instances Christianity simply because people are not under the authority of God. And they end up arguing with him.

In Luke chapter 20 verse 20 it says, they watched him and sent forth spies which should pretend themselves to be just men that they might take hold of his words and deliver him to the power and the authority of the governor. In other words to bring him under the dominion of man. And this is what fallen men has always wanted to do to bring God under his dominion.

Somehow that he can mold God. He can fashion God. He can make God into what he thinks God should be.

And so ultimately Christ comes to the earth God in human form and his own do not receive him. Here is the one who created the world. The irony of it.

He gave breath to everyone who's walking around him. Their hearts beat by his permission. Their eyes blink by his permission.

Their days are numbered by his omniscience. Everything that is happening around them has come and exists and all are held by the word of his power. And here is God himself walking in the midst of them and they will not receive him.

They don't recognize his authority. That's really the issue. They don't recognize the authority of God and ultimately they don't recognize the authority of Christ.

Now into the scene of controversy which will ultimately betray and crucify Christ steps in an outsider and he has a faith that is found nowhere in all of Israel. Just come under my roof he says. No he says you don't have to come under my roof.

Just speak the word and my servant will be healed. Not necessary to have an elder come to my house and anoint with oil. Nice if you want to do that but you don't have to do that.

I see the promise. Speak it. And my servant will be healed.

Now we ask ourselves the question how did this man have such an open vision of Jesus? How did this happen? How did an outsider come in and have a faith that Israel didn't have? Now in Matthew chapter 8 and verse 9 we find the key. He says I am a man under authority having soldiers under me and I say to this man go and he goeth and to another come and he cometh and to my servant do this and he doeth it. Now in other translations I'm going to read to you from a few of them.

It really helps to clear it up. In the American Standard Version he says I am also a man under authority. The Christian New Testament says for I also am a man under the order of others.

The New English Bible says I know for in my position I am myself under orders with soldiers under me. The Knox Translation says I too know what it is to obey authority. Incredible.

In other words this man was saying listen I'm under authority. I have the authority of Rome over me and I'm a loyal soldier and if Rome sends a directive to do something I do it. They don't have to come here.

They don't have to come to Capernaum from Rome to see if I've done it because I'm under authority. I walk under authority. Nobody has to check up on me.

If I'm told by the authority over me to do this I do it and subsequently I have men under me who I tell to do things and I don't have to follow them either. I'm under authority and they're under my authority and when I say do this they go and they do it. And he says if these soldiers that I give an instruction to fail to obey what I've given them to do I have the whole power of Rome behind me.

I don't have to go and punish them. Rome will punish them because I am a man under authority. And then he says something so profound.

I see that you also are a man under authority. I see that you are not a man here just doing your own religious thing. You have been sent and you are performing as it is the will of somebody who has an authority over you.

Amazing. He likens Christ to his own position. Because he's under authority he can see.

I see too that you are a man under authority. That's what the Roman centurion was saying. And you've been sent here by someone to do a work.

And so I speak to my soldiers and my soldiers go and they do whatever I ask them to do. I don't have to follow them. I don't have to go with them because I'm under authority and because I'm under authority I'm in authority.

And he says I recognize you as a man under authority and because you're under authority you're in authority. So you don't have to come to my house. Just speak the word.

Just say it and my servant will be healed. Amazing when you begin to see it. Being under authority he sees and he knows the power of the spoken word of God.

Because he's under authority. You wouldn't think that authority is directly limited to being, or faith rather is directly limited to being under authority. Or intertwined rather.

But it is. He's under authority. And God opens his eyes.

And here we have the people of God all around but they're not under his authority. Obviously they're not. They're about to crucify him.

They don't recognize him. If they had they'd be bowing on their knees everywhere instead of just clamoring around him asking a lot of questions. They would be doing the same thing as the centurion saying just speak into this situation it will be healed.

Speak into my life and I'll be whole. Speak to my children. And their hearts will be touched.

They will be changed. And the incredible thing about the centurion is that he comes to God and he's not seeking God for himself. He seeks God for his friend.

And we see in this man a type of faith which God will give to those who walk under authority. And in Matthew chapter 8 verse 13 it said Jesus said to the centurion go thy way as thou hast believed so be it done unto thee and his servant was healed in the selfsame hour. You see in this last hour that we're living in we are called to be a people of prayer you and I. We are called now to come to the throne of God.

Jeremiah I believe it's 33 says call out to me and I will show you great and mighty things that up to this time I'm paraphrasing the scripture but up to this point you've not known. We're called to be a people of prayer. We're being moved as a church by the spirit of God to come to the throne room and begin to ask for our generation and begin to ask for impossible situations of young people in our streets that have been raised without the knowledge of God.

We're being asked to pray in unison with the Lord and to expect him to do the marvelous. In order to have our prayer understood and heard in order that we may have eyes of authority and faith we've got to get under authority. This is a time folks.

Remember Noah the world was about to be plunged into its own destruction and God found a man who would walk under authority and he's living in a generation where everybody around him thinks that walking under authority is a ridiculous thing. A lawlessness and rebellion had gripped that society but Noah heard and he walked under authority and the scripture says he prepared an ark to the saving of his house. I want to challenge you.

Fathers, mothers get under authority and prepare an ark to the saving of your house. Get under the authority of God and start building something that's eternal. Let the whole world laugh.

Let all your neighbors mock. Let every mocker consider you an idiot. Let them laugh if they want to laugh but get under the authority of God.

This word is the instruction about how to build your life and build your home and build your mind, build your future and build your security is in this book. We have the designs all in here. I think about a time when the spirit of death was about to pass over all of Egypt and so many of that first generation of the strength of every home were going to die just like in our generation.

Young people just given to violence without caring anymore. We're going to see an increase of this lawlessness, not a decrease of it. But God gave an instruction to the children of Israel and only those who obeyed it, only those who came under the authority of the word of God were safe from the spirit of death that was passing over the entire nation.

Told them, get the blood on your doorpost, get the lamb inside your house, cook it, serve it to your family, have a time of family devotions, open this book, begin to believe that this is truth, speak about it like it's truth, talk about it like it's non-negotiable to your children. Tell them about the marvelous deliverances of God. Tell them, make the promises of God come alive because your own eyes are open.

You're a man, you're a woman under the authority of God and you can see what no one else can see. You're not speaking the word of God like the religiously dead. You're speaking the word of God like those

who are alive in Christ.

You have a vision of the future under authority. We have to say no more arguments, no more excuses, no more standing on the outside looking in. I choose to walk under the authority of God.

I choose to forgive those that have wronged me. I choose to pay my taxes. I choose to deal honestly in financial things on top of the table and not underneath.

I choose to speak the truth even if it hurts. I choose to say what is right and not what is wrong. I choose to walk honestly when everyone else is walking dishonestly.

I choose to walk out of the lunchroom when people are cursing the name of Christ and speaking dirty stories. I choose to live a righteous life. I choose to get up out of the seat of this cornfield.

I choose not to stand in the way with sinners. I choose to be governed by the word of Almighty God. I choose life because God is the only one who has authored and can give me eternal life.

I choose to love my wife as Christ loved the church. I choose to call my husband in the manner that the scripture says he ought to be called and listened to. I choose to obey my parents.

I choose to come under the authority of God. I choose to honor every authority that God has placed in His church. Every usher, every book table worker, every janitor, everybody who's got authority, I choose to walk under that authority.

I choose to obey the laws of the land in so much that they're not instructing me to do things contrary to the word of God. I choose to honor and respect every agent of the law in this and any other nation. I choose to walk honestly and honorably before all men.

I choose to have God's word every day as I open it to be my authority of faith and practice. I choose. And making that choice, beloved, listen to me.

All of a sudden, one day in your own home, something happens. Your own children are spiritually sick. Your own family gets into trouble.

You come to the throne of God. You say, Lord, all you have to do is speak the word and my house will be healed. My children can be brought into divine order.

My marriage can glorify Christ, can be a type of Christ in this church on the earth, a testimony. I'm a man under authority. I'm a woman under authority.

And I see the power of your word. I see the faithfulness of your promises. Doubt and unbelief are gone.

And I choose and I am enabled to believe. Just say the word. And God says, well, let me take you to where I've spoken it already.

And you get into the scriptures and see it. Hallelujah. I am living this.

I see it in my own home. I'm living this, folks. And it's not just a theory.

I'm not just pulling something out of the Bible to preach on. I'm living it, seeing it as I cry out to God and walk under authority as best as I know. And he's shown me.

I see the future of my own family. I see the future of my own grandchildren who are not even born yet. I was in prayer one day and I saw my first two grandchildren.

I don't want you to think I'm some kind of a mystic because I'm not. But I did. I saw them.

I saw my house long after I'm dead with other generations of people that won't know me more than a picture on the wall walking with God because I made a choice to walk under authority. I see my family on the mission field. I saw it a long time ago, even when natural sight seemed to defy it.

I saw it. I saw the heart that God said he was going to give to my own children. I see it unfolding every day.

Everything that God's ever spoken, I see it happen. I see grace and glory touching every area of my marriage. And it's so wonderful to grow old together and to be in love the way we are.

I say that unashamedly. It wasn't always that way. We started out with a very difficult marriage because of my selfishness.

But I chose to walk under authority. I believe that I'm here today in this pulpit because I've chosen to walk under authority. I believe that in some measure the open heaven that I've known is because I've chosen to walk under authority.

And I feel a cry of the Holy Spirit for this church. The cry of the Holy Spirit is, get under authority and get under there now. You already know what to do.

Many of you know what to do. You're not novices in the Word of God and you already know what to do. Stop arguing with God and get under authority and say, Lord, this is the authority.

This is the authority for my life and I'm going to follow this authority and I believe that you're going to open my eyes and when trouble touches my house, I'm going to have promises that I can go to. And I don't need a manifestation of your presence in my home. I know because you've already given the Word that my home will be healed.

I already know that my children will live for you. I already know. And folks, listen to me.

This is not a principle that is just in effect for pastors. It's for everybody. Even if you're divorced and your children are long distanced from you, there is a principle here.

And God holds himself to this. You begin to obey God and you'll find your sons and daughters coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. You'll find the touch of God beginning to touch your whole heritage.

Your whole family starts to get touched by God. I'm seeing it now in my own family, my natural family, my brothers, my sister. For years, my mother and father, years resisted the truth of Christ, but I chose to walk under authority.

I chose to obey God. I remember my father for so long resisted the things of God. He was a very proud man.

And when I became a Christian and began to live for the Lord in ministry, he said some very hard things to me, very, very hurtful things at times. And yet the Lord told me, honor him. Just honor him.

That's all I'm asking you to do, honor him. And so I made the choice. I could have easily lashed back with my words, but I chose to honor him.

And sometimes family vacations were very hard for me because it was very uncomfortable. And then in his latter years, he got cancer. And when he had this colostomy on his side, he wouldn't deal with it. And I was the only one that could touch him.

I was the only one in the last hours of his life that he would let hold his hand, really could stroke his hair and tell him I loved him. And in spite of all the things that have been said over the years, I chose to obey God. And in the last conscious hour, before he went into a coma, I led him to Christ.

We had the most wonderful hour together. And I want to tell you something, folks. I saw him saved before he was saved.

The whole natural world was against it, but I saw him saved. I saw him. I saw it.

I saw it 22 years before he bent his knee to Christ, that he would be saved. I used to tell him, you're going to be saved before you die. You're going to come to Christ before you die.

And he would wave his hands at me every time and make some gesture and say some things. But I saw it. Beloved, get under authority.

I want to give an altar call today for every person here that this message has spoken to. And you know that you're a person who needs to learn how to walk under authority again. You don't want to be left out in the coming days.

It's a hard thing sometimes to admit, but it's the beginning of faith. Get under authority, folks. Get under authority.

If that's you today, you can say, Pastor, you've preached an issue in my heart that I need to bend to. I need to get under the authority of God's Word. I want eyes of faith.

I'm going to ask you to join me at this altar. Let's stand, please, in the balcony. The education annex, you could stand between the screens to not block the view, if you would.

And the rest, in the balcony, you can go to either exit. The main sanctuary, just slip out wherever you are, unashamedly. I need to get under authority.

I need to walk under the authority of God's Word. This will be a day of victory for you. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Pray with me. Lord Jesus, I admit that the sin of rebellion is as witchcraft, because that's what your Word says.

God, today, I bend my knee and my heart to the authority of the Word of God, to the authority that you have placed in your church and in this nation. I choose today to be a person who walks under authority. I trust, Lord, that you will give me the strength that I'm going to need to obey you.

But I see the promise that as I do, you will open my eyes, and I will see who you are. You will open my mind, and I will understand the power of your spoken Word. And you will make me into a person of faith.

God, I ask you today, that through my life, you bring healing. Through my prayers, you bring deliverance into my house, among my family, my friends, my neighbors, my nation, my world, that you flow through me as I believe and bring healing. Jesus, thank you for speaking to my heart.

I bend my knee and confess with my mouth, here today, that Jesus Christ is the Lord of my life. God, give me the strength to obey you. In Jesus' name, amen.

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