

Kingdom Authority

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of exercising God's authority in our lives, which is given to us through Jesus Christ, and using it to make disciples and bring people into the kingdom of God.

Scripture: Psalm 2:1, Matthew 16:21, Matthew 16:24, Luke 4:5, John 12:24, Acts 1:6, Romans 8:37

Topics: "Spiritual Authority", "Discipleship"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the authority given to believers by Jesus, emphasizing the power to carry a cross, pray to the Father, make disciples, and break through the gates of death. He contrasts the confidence and impact of those who walk in this authority with the lack of impact seen in a group of Christian students who felt powerless in a hostile environment. Bieber highlights the need for believers to embrace their anointing, exercise boldness, and live out their faith with the assurance of God's power and presence.

Transcript

Why do the nations rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

The kings of the world set themselves, and the rulers of the earth take council together, against the Lord and against his anointed saying, "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us."

...Let's break loose from God. We don't want Him to rule over us. We're going to do our own thing.

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel." Psalm 2: 1-9

Some years ago, I attended a meeting of Christian students on a university campus, in one of the upper floors of the student building in a little room away from the hustle and bustle of the campus.

The topic of the meeting was, "How to Reach Our Campus with the Gospel."

Somehow, one got the feeling that there was not one of us in the room that had any hope of having an impact on the campus. The only place we seemed to feel bold and confident with any freedom to talk about the gospel was there in that secluded room huddled with each other. We all knew that the atmosphere out there on the campus was hostile and indifferent and cynical and hard - when it came to talking about Jesus.

So we talked among ourselves...

We had a nice time. But you can be sure there was no impact on the campus as a result of that meeting.

A few weeks later we came across a bunch of crazy "Jesus freaks" meeting in a house a few miles away, and they too, felt the call from God to reach out with the gospel. They also were aware they were surrounded by a hostile, indifferent, cynical world.

But these reborn hippies had an amazing confidence that they had the authority of God to reach out there and touch people --- that they were destined to catch men, women, living souls into God's kingdom.

And they did.

We asked Ralph, who was the general of that little freaky army, to give us a couple of guys, to show us how to reach out in the neighborhood of our inner-city church.

Bless his heart, Ralph sent us Bob and Milton, who set up in a flat near the church, and in a matter of weeks it was wall-to-wall people at their nightly Bible studies.

They were making disciples. People were coming from the neighborhood in droves.

They had authority.

Now you may say, "Oh yeah, well that was 'Jesus freak time'. It was a fad. It was happening all over the country. It was a particular season."

That may all be true, but you can't deny that these people were convinced that they had authority. That when they spoke to their friends, stopped a stranger on the street, reached out and helped somebody in the name of the Lord, they were convinced that they were under the anointing of God. That they had a word from God - the Holy Spirit was at work in what they were doing.

So here we are today. Still praising God for His mercy toward us, thanking Him for the grace, which has been released into our lives through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

And dramatic things have happened in our lives.

We have been set free from our bondage.

We have been raised from the dead.

We have been lifted to the right hand of the Father with our Lord,
sitting with Him in heavenly places.

And we have been anointed with power from on high -

the power of the Holy Spirit.

And yet, when we leave our churches, and walk into some very challenging mission fields, what happens?

Do we live among our friends, in our places of work, in our neighborhoods, as men and women who have been raised from the dead - who are under the anointing of power from on high - the Holy Spirit?

Do we take the authority of Heaven and bring it down into places where we live and work?

Do we exercise that authority and have an impact on the people with whom we deal everyday?

At best, we have to say with the disciples, "Lord, increase our faith! Give us boldness!"

From the time Jesus rose out of the waters of His baptism, He was absolutely certain of one thing: He had authority.

Remember, God the Son though He was, He divested himself of His divine prerogatives and was a human being like we are - dependent just as we are to walk by faith. He didn't snap His fingers and make the sky fall in.

But He was convinced that Psalm 2, which was the coronation hymn for the kings of Israel, applied, in a unique way, to Him.

I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

Jesus walked in lowliness and meekness all His life, but He was certain that He was under the authority of His Father. When you looked at Him, He didn't look like much. He was meek and lowly of heart. He didn't present an image of power, like the big shots of this world.

Forty days after His baptism, Satan comes along and offers Him authority - the kind of authority this world respects and looks up to. Jesus tells him to get lost.

The devil took him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory; for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If you, then, shall worship me, it shall all be yours." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'" Luke 4: 5-8

No short cuts. No compromise. No coalition government with Satan.

Jesus is going to exercise this hidden mysterious authority which God has given Him only in the Father's way, only according to the Father's program.

He goes back to His hometown Nazareth, enters the synagogue, and stands up to read. They give Him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and He rolls it open to Isaiah 61, the place where it says:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor...

He rolls the scroll back together again, gives it to the attendant, and sits down. The eyes of all in the synagogue are looking at Him. He speaks:

This day this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

...That's authority.

Lowly, meek, and yet always doing exactly what the Father shows Him to do. So He indeed brought good news to the poor, delivered the captives, opened the eyes of the blind, lifted burdens, gave hope to the people looking for the kingdom.

But Jesus did more. Jesus gave this authority to His disciples, of all the ages, including us, if we are committed to Him.

Now we have it.

After the resurrection, the disciples met Him at a mountain in Galilee, to which He had told them to go, and they saw Him and worshipped Him, but some doubted.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." Matthew 28

"All authority is mine now and now I'm giving it to you as my disciples."

Without that authority those men would have been utterly lost.

We see exactly the same thing after the resurrection in Acts 1:6. The disciples ask:

"Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

Without that power, they would still be sitting around in that upper room in Jerusalem, just like we were sitting in that upper room in the student building. They would have been talking to each other about Jesus. Reminiscing about the past. And that would have been it.

So what is this authority that Jesus gives to His disciples when He says,

All authority has been given to me. Go therefore...

Jesus gives us authority to do four things:

First of all, He gives us the authority to carry a cross.

Second, He gives us the authority to pray to the Father.

Third, He gives us the authority to make disciples.

Fourth, He gives us the authority to break through the gates of death.

The first essential place we start - no shortcuts - is the authority to carry a cross.

Many people today have the idea that to walk around carrying a cross is some kind of sacrifice, something morbid, perhaps even weak. But the truth is, to carry a cross is a thing of divine authority, for that cross is the only source of redemptive power in this world.

I'm not just talking about the cross He carried for us - died on for us. I'm talking about the cross we carry in response to His command.

Remember just after Peter had proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah, he added some alarming words:

From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men." Matthew 16: 21

Peter doesn't understand that the only way Jesus can break the curse is to go to the cross and die.

Peter doesn't understand that the only way Peter is going to accomplish anything eternal is to do the same thing.

And he's going to do it.

Peter is also going to a cross and he's going to die.

This is why Jesus spelled out the cost of discipleship:

If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself,
take up his cross and follow me.

"I'm going to a cross and so are you if you're serious."

For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

The source of power - the only source of power - in the Body of Christ is that cross. His cross. And ours.

Any power, in the Body of Christ, that is not connected to that cross is demonic.

I don't care if you have powerful connections, or your pockets are full of money, if you have a dynamic personality, or whatever other asset you think you can contribute to the kingdom - it becomes demonic if it isn't connected to the cross. Our "assets" must first be crucified, and then raised from the dead.

We deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus, not because we're natural heroes, but because Jesus, by His dying, gives us the power to carry a cross.

The authority to carry a cross, to pour out our lives, to lay down our lives, to be servants -- often when we have no idea where it's going to lead, or how it's going to work out.

...unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Jesus is talking about himself and us.

We too can be that grain of wheat. We can think that way. We can live that way. We can die that way. We can rise that way because He gives us the authority to die to ourselves and rise up into freedom.

Secondly, Jesus gives us the authority to pray to the Father.

Ask of me and I shall give thee the nations as thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, in my name, it will be done for you. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.

Pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into the harvest.

Jesus continually gives us the assurance that if we come to the Father as His disciples, in His name, because we belong to Him, we can be certain that we will be heard.

Jesus, by His cross, gives us the authority now to come into the throne room of God and ask.

So don't pussy foot. Don't mumble. Don't stand around and wring your hands. Don't look out the window and wonder if there is a God.

Come into the presence of God before the throne and ask!

Ask of me and I shall give thee the nations as thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

Thirdly, Jesus gives us the authority to make disciples.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...

In any city in North America, we don't have to go far to find the nations of the world. They've come to us!

So the Lord says, "Go out there and bring them into my kingdom - bring them under my word, bring them under my teaching - disciple them."

Surely there are people who will respond if we will draw near to them --- people who will follow us into the kingdom. They'll walk with us right into the waters of baptism. They'll come with us right into the footsteps of Jesus if we exercise the authority we have already been given and draw near to these people and give them some good news.

Don't be upset if they smoke cigarettes. Give them some good news. God will take care of the cigarettes when He's ready.

Give them some good news. Break their chains. Open their eyes. Lift their burdens. And set them free.

Finally, we have been given authority to break through the gates of death.

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of death shall not prevail against it.

Those gates will have to yield to the church, the Body, because the Body has the authority to break through.

We are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

So we go out there and call people out of their death stupor - their death bondage, their death addiction - into God's light. Empowered by the cross - our Lord's cross, and the one He has given us to carry, we wake the dead by the word of the Lord.

With our natural eye we look at people and say;

"That guy is too far gone. He can't be reached."

"She's hopeless. There is no way I can get through to her."

"This man over here is so successful in this world his heart is hardened."

But with the eye of the Spirit we see in every one of those cases, and many more, that they are wrapped around by the chains of death.

Both the "successes" and the "failures" are imprisoned behind iron bars in the region of the dead, and we have been given the authority to set them free.

Ask of me and I shall give you the nations as thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth as thy possession.

He's talking about authority.

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

He's talking about authority. The authority given to the crucified and risen Lamb of God, who is now King of kings and Lord of lords. He has given this authority to us.

He has given us the authority to deny ourselves, pick up our cross, follow Him...so let's do it.

He has given us the authority to come into the presence of the living God, His Father and ours, and ask and it's done...so let's do it.

He's given us the authority to make disciples of all nations. And more than that, He's brought the nations right to us ...so let's do it.

He has given us the authority to break through those chains of death and free those captives...so let's do it.

You are under a call as an anointed servant of God.

Expect that at least once this week you are going to find yourself standing face-to-face with a living soul who is ripe for the kingdom.

When that moment comes, open your mouth; get down on your knees and start washing feet. Do whatever a servant of God is to do in that situation, and you will see the gates of death break open and release that captive into your care.

PRAYER:

Sent fire into our church Oh God! Send fire into my heart, Lord Jesus! Burn out the apathy. Convict our complacent, condescending hearts. Bring us back to Calvary for cleansing and power.

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