

(Secret of Paul's Authority) 1. Paul Was a Bondslave

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen explores the secret of Paul's authority, emphasizing his identity as a bondslave of Christ and the implications for Christian living today.

Duration: 44:43

Scripture: Isaiah 64:4, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 26:39, Romans 1:1, Romans 8:14, Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 2:9

Topics: "Authority"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living as a bond slave to Jesus Christ. He uses the example of the apostle Paul, who considered himself a bon slave of Jesus Christ. Paul's mindset was not filled with his own ideas or the suggestions of others, but he waited for his heavenly master to tell him what to do. The speaker highlights that the most important thing about a servant is to do just what the master tells them to do. The sermon encourages listeners to live in the will of God and to finish the work that He has given them to do.

Transcript

I first of all want to bring to each one of you very warm greetings from India in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's a real joy and privilege for me to be here, to share together with you in this ministry. My subject for these days is the secret of Paul's authority.

Before we consider that, shall we bow our heads for a moment of prayer? Our Heavenly Father, Thou hast written this word through Thy Holy Spirit. We recognize that it is only Thy Spirit that can interpret this word to us. And we look to Thee in faith.

We cast aside the reasonings of our natural mind. And we look to Thee, Lord, to give us revelations over and above what our natural mind can understand. And reveal to us the things that Thou hast hidden from the wise and the prudent of the world, that which human eyes have never seen, human ears have never heard, but which Thy word says Thou hast revealed through Thy Spirit.

O Lord, open to us the treasures of Thy word. We look to Thee and we believe that we shall not be disappointed. We thank Thee for our confidence is not in man, but in Thee.

Accept our praise and answer our prayer, God, for we pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. One of the things that characterized the early Church was their spiritual authority.

When people looked at the early Church, what they were conscious of was that these people had an authority, not just knowledge. They were not impressed by the fact that these people knew their Bibles well, merely. And neither did the early Church have a great reputation for having the great personages of society in their midst.

In fact, the early Church contained people who were lower down in society. But there was one thing that characterized the Church described in the Acts of the Apostles, and that was spiritual authority. And in this, they walked in the footsteps of their Master.

Because when Jesus was on earth, there's a verse at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 7, verse 29, which says that when people heard him, they were astonished, because Jesus did not speak like the scribes. He did not speak like the people who merely had a lot of theological degrees, and who knew the Scriptures well. He spoke with authority, and that's what astonished them.

And in one of the statements of Jesus in relation to his return to earth, he said, the Son of Man is like a person who has gone away to a far country, and he has left his servants behind. To every man he has given a work, and to his servants he has given authority. That's found in Mark 13, verse 34.

And this was one thing that was true of the Apostle Paul. There was an authority in his life, marked by the power of God in his ministry. It was not just his personality that impressed people.

When he said, as we read in Philippians 3.17, Be followers together of me. It was not vain boasting. He knew that by God's grace, his life had become an example that other people could follow.

He did not have to say, like many say, don't look at me. I'm full of faults, but look at Christ. He never said that.

He felt that if he was unfit to be followed, if he was not an example that other people could look at, then he was unfit to be an apostle. So he said, be followers of me. He said that not only to the Philippians, with whom he had spent a short time, he wrote the same thing to the Corinthian Christians.

And the Bible tells us that Paul spent one and a half years in Corinth. You see, he could not have told them to be followers together of him, if they had seen carnality in his nature during those one and a half years. It's very easy to think that some speaker who comes and stands here just for a few evenings in a week is very spiritual.

But it's quite another thing when you live together with a man for one and a half years and you see him morning, noon, and night. And then you know whether he's really spiritual or not. And Paul lived with those Corinthians.

And he could turn around and tell them, be followers of me. At the end of three years in Ephesus, he called the elders of the church in Ephesus together in Acts chapter 20. And he said, you know what manner of man I have been with you all these days.

They had observed his light for three years. And they knew, and he knew, that there was nothing they could find as a fault in him. And so he could turn around and tell them as well to be followers of him.

He could tell Timothy, who lived and slept with him for so many years, who saw him when he was under pressure, who saw him when he was sick with his eye disease, who saw him in victory and in sorrow. And he said to Timothy, you have known my manner of life, you follow me. That was the type of man Paul was.

And so, I believe the Lord has given us in the apostle Paul, one whom we can set before us in a sense as a pattern. Of course, there is a sense in which we follow no man. We follow only Jesus.

But it's very easy when we think of following Jesus as an example, to subconsciously say within ourselves, well, he was the son of God. We can never attain to that. And that's why I believe the Lord has given us one of our own nature, Paul, who could also say, be followers of me.

Wherever Paul went, it was the impact produced by his life that produced results in the lives of those to whom he ministered. You see, people could have forgotten the three points of his sermons. They could have forgotten the funny stories he said and the illustrations he used.

But there was one thing about Paul they could not forget. They could not forget the impact of his life. He was not like modern-day preachers who are remembered just for the funny stories they say and the illustrations they use in their sermons.

He was like, he was a man whose life made an impact for Jesus Christ in such a way that people couldn't forget it. There was an authority in his life. Unbelievers recognized it.

In Thessalonica, the Jews referring to Paul said, Here is a man who has turned the world upside down and he has come here. Now, people don't say that about many Christians these days. Here are people who have turned the world upside down.

They may say, here are people who believe certain things and who organize certain conventions and who sing in a certain way and believe in a certain book. But there was something more about Paul. He not only believed in a certain book, there was such an authority in his life, people recognized, those who were the enemies of the gospel, recognized that this was a dangerous man because he was turning the world upside down.

Even unbelieving craftsmen who were producing idols as their business in Ephesus. We read of a man called Demetrius who said, This man, Paul, he's convinced people in Ephesus and all over Asia that these idols are not gods. There was an impact made by Paul's ministry and the reason for it was that there was a light back of that ministry with which God could stand completely and to which God could commit himself completely.

And this was the reason for the authority that there was in his life. What type of person was Paul himself? Did he have the personality of a film star that could tantalize people when he stood in a pulpit? Was that the thing that impressed people? Or were people impressed by the big string of degrees that he had after his name? He never cared for these carnal things. He never sought to impress people with any of these carnal things.

Tradition tells us that the Apostle Paul was four feet ten inches high. You'd have hardly been able to see him if he had stood here in this pulpit. He was bald and beset by an eye disease, far from the personality of a film star.

And even his speech, he says, was contemptible. No, the secret of his authority lay somewhere else. It was not in his personality.

It was not in his eloquence. It was not in any degrees that impressed people that he had after his name. None of these things.

And you also remember he was not a superman. He was not some special type of person who comes into this world just once in a thousand years or something like that. He was an ordinary man.

He was an ordinary man who made mistakes like you and me. A man who quarreled with his co-worker Barnabas once upon a time. He was very much an earthen vessel.

Particularly when we read his second episode of the Corinthian, you see him acknowledging this fact that there were fears within him. There were times when he was in despair. Times when he was in perplexity.

He acknowledges all this. He was very much an earthen vessel. But he tells us in 2 Corinthians 4 and verse 7 that within this earthen vessel of his he had a treasure.

He says in verse 7 of 2 Corinthians 4, we have this treasure in earthen vessels. And there is a reason for this. He says so that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.

It was not because of the earthen vessel. It was not because of any human factor that Paul's ministry was a success. There was no human factor attached to it.

There was only one reason. God was with him. And people recognized it.

He knew it. Whether people listened to him or not. Whether people appreciated his message or not.

Whether they invited him again to speak there or not. It made no difference to him. People recognized that God was with this man.

And I tell you this brothers and sisters. If there is one thing the world needs to recognize today, it's not how well we in our churches can sing. Or how wonderful speakers we have in our pulpits.

If there is one thing that the world needs to recognize in us as Christians in our churches today, if we are to fulfill our ministry, it is this that God is with us. And if he is not with us, if he is not consciously there with a preacher in a pulpit, and if he is not in our churches, then everything else that we have is valueless. We can impress people with our wonderful choirs.

We can impress people with our eloquent speakers. And with all our wonderful administration and arrangement of things. But if the power and authority of God are absent, then we have wasted our time.

This is where I feel the church in our day has made such a mistake. Trying to impress people with carnal things. Trying to impress people that we have got this great man who is so qualified as our pastor or speaker in our convention.

Valueless. What we need is the power and authority of God. That's what Paul has.

That's what we desperately need today and what we need to seek for. And I believe there was a reason why God could commit his authority to the Apostle Paul. He does not commit it to anybody at random.

There was a reason why God could stand with this man. Because his life had certain characteristics about it. And this is what I'd like to consider with you in these evenings.

Because, as I said, he was an earthen vessel. Just like us. He was no better than any of us in himself.

He was a man concerning his own self. He said in Romans 7, 18, I know, beyond a shadow of doubt, I know that in me, that is in myself, there dwells not one single good thing. There's hope for all of us, brothers and sisters.

If Paul said that, we all can start from there, can't we? Paul said, I start from zero. There's not one single good thing in me. And that was the man who turned the world upside down for the Lord Jesus Christ in his day.

Who served his generation by the will of God. Who lived a life which fulfilled all the will of God. He finished his God-appointed course in a life over which he'll have no regret in eternity.

So different from the life of many a Christian. What was the secret of his life? There are seven things I'd like to speak of in these seven evenings. First of all, in Romans chapter 1, verse 1, Paul tells us about himself.

He calls himself, Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ. And that word in the Greek is a word which means a bond slave. Not just a servant, but a bond slave.

And the accurate translation of that word would be, Paul, a bond slave of Jesus Christ. Now, in those days, there were slaves and there were servants. And there was a difference between the slave and the servant.

And we need to recognize this difference if we want to understand what Paul was actually meaning when he said that he was a bond slave of the Lord Jesus Christ. A servant was one who was hired for certain hours a day, a certain number of days a week, and who had certain privileges and rights. He had to be paid a certain amount for the service he rendered.

But a slave was different. A slave, unlike a servant, was bought in the market. Now, it may be difficult for us to conceive of this because we don't have slavery in our day.

But in those days, if a man wanted to buy a slave, all he had to do was just to go out to the market, like we go to the market to buy vegetables or fruits. A man could go out to the market and buy a slave. And that slave would be his for him to do what he liked with, just like the vegetable you buy in the market is yours for you to do what you like with it.

And Paul says, I am a bond slave of Jesus Christ. When a man went out to the market and he bought a slave, he had to pay money for it, for that man whom he bought. And once he paid the money for that man, that man belonged to him completely.

He had no more rights over himself. That man could not complain that he was not being treated too well. He had no rights because he was a slave.

He was not just a servant. He could not get any pay at the end of every month, unlike the servant, because he was a slave. He could not expect to be released after some time, because he was a slave.

He was completely his master forever. That's what Paul says that he was. In the Old Testament, the Lord laid down laws for the children of Israel to have slaves.

In Exodus 21 we read that if you have a slave, you can only keep him for six years, and the seventh year he must go free. But in the seventh year, if he decides that he doesn't want to go free, he can come to his master and say, well, I don't want to go out free, because I love my master. I want to serve you forever.

And the master will, in that case, take the slave out to the gates of the city, where the elders were sitting, and he would make a hole in his ear, and that slave would have to serve his master forever. That hole in the ear signifying that henceforth, this ear would listen only to one master. That's what Paul says.

He was. His ear was dark. Henceforth, he would listen only to one master.

This is the meaning of his words to the Corinthian Christians. 1 Corinthians 7, verse 23, where he says, You are bought with a price. Be not ye the servants of men.

And earlier on in chapter 6, verses 19 and 20, he says, Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. This was the basis on which Paul consecrated his life to Jesus Christ.

Paul gave himself to the Lord Jesus Christ completely on this basis, because he recognized that he had been purchased. Like a man went out to a slave market and bought a man, Jesus, through shedding his blood on the cross, had purchased Paul. And Paul recognized that he had no more right upon his own life.

When he came and gave his life to Jesus Christ, he did not feel that he was doing the Lord a big favor. Like some people think today, when they give their lives to Jesus Christ, they think they are doing God a great favor, for which God should be grateful to them for the rest of their lives. Now, that's totally wrong.

The only proper basis for our consecration is a recognition of the fact that we have been purchased, and we are not our own. You know, there are many various reasons with which people can come and give their lives to Jesus Christ. Some people can come and give their lives to the Lord because they don't want to go to hell.

That can be a very selfish reason. I don't want to go to hell, I want to go to heaven, and so, Lord Jesus, I give my life to you. Now, the Lord may accept you on that ground, I don't know, but that is certainly not the basis given in the Bible for consecrating our lives to Him.

Some other people may rise a little higher and say, well, the Lord has done so much for me, surely I must do something for Him. And out of gratitude, they may come and give their lives to the Lord. But even that is not adequate, that's not sufficient.

One day you may feel that the Lord has not been too good to you and you may decide not to serve Him as much as before. You see? Not an adequate ground. But, if you come to this level, the highest level, where you recognize it's not a question of my escaping hell or going to heaven, it's not even a question of gratitude.

It's a question of my recognizing this fact that I am not my own. I'm taking possession of a house which is not mine. I'm a usurper sitting on the throne of my life.

I'm a thief who's stolen my life away from God. And I have to come back to God like a repentant thief. Not merely out of gratitude for what God has done for me, but out of conviction and in repentance for my having stolen away my life from God.

If I come and steal your wallet, and a few days later I get convicted about it, and I come back and give you your money back, I'm not doing you a great favor. I'm not doing something for which you should be eternally grateful to me. I should come back to you as a repentant thief and say, I'm sorry I stole your purse from you a few days ago.

Please forgive me. Please take it back. And that, my friends, is the only basis on which we can consecrate our lives to God.

Lord, my life is not mine. It is yours. You purchased it on the cross.

Long before that you created it, but I didn't recognize it. Now you've purchased it, and I come and give it back to you. Sorry that I've taken away this life from you for all these years.

That's how Paul came and gave his life to the Lord. Right from the moment of his conversion. You remember what he told the Lord on the Damascus Road? Lord, what will you have me to do? And that was the motto of his life.

His year had been dug, and he would henceforth listen only to one master. He would not listen to himself. He would not listen to other men.

He had years for none of these. He had years only for the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says that David was a man after God's own heart.

And I believe one of the reasons why David was a man after God's own heart was because deep down in David's heart, as he tells us in Psalm 40, verses 6 to 8, he had a great desire. He said to God, O God, sacrifice an offering you did not desire, but lo, I come to do your will. I delight to do your will, O God.

And because deep down in David's heart, he had this great longing to do only the will of God, like we read in Philippians 3, what Paul said, One thing I do, I press toward the mark for the price of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. To do the will of God. Because this was the deepest longing in his heart, God could forgive David the mistakes he made.

And he made some serious mistakes. God punished him for them. But God could forgive and forget them.

And still call David a man after his own heart. You know, this teaches us that what God is so much interested in is not the impression we make upon others, but whether deep down in our hearts, and God alone knows what's deep down in each of our hearts sitting here, whether there's a desire to do only one thing in life, the will of God. Whether our spiritual ears have been dug so that we hear henceforth only one voice, the voice of our Master.

Sometimes in some of the offices, government offices in India, I've seen sitting outside the office room of the manager of the office, there will be a messenger boy. He just sits on a chair outside the door of the manager's office, apparently doing nothing. But then the manager rings the bell, and immediately this messenger boy is up on his feet, and he goes in, and he asks, what do you want me to do? That's how Paul lived before his Lord.

His own mind was not full of brilliant ideas as to what he should be doing. He just sat like that messenger boy outside the door of his heavenly Master, waiting for his Master to tell him what to do, where to go, and this was why his service was effective. He lived and served like a bond slave.

He had given up the right to run his own life. He tells us about himself in 1 Corinthians 4, verse 1 and 2. He says, let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards. And verse 2, moreover it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful.

And in the Living Bible that's paraphrased as, the most important thing about a servant is that he does just what his Master tells him to. The most important thing about a servant is that he does just what his Master tells him to. He's not full of brilliant ideas as to what he should be doing for his Master.

So many people are doing Christian work like that these days. But a true servant of God, he waits in his Master's presence. He's a bond slave.

And he says, Lord, what do you want me to do? And I'm ready to do that. I remember writing down in the back of my Bible some time ago a little poem about the Lord searching the world for a certain type of man. And I believe the Lord's looking for this type of man even today.

The Lord says, I'm seeking for one who will wait and watch for my beckoning hand and my eye, who will work in my manner the work I give and the work I did not pass by. And all the joy that is brought to me when one such as this I can find. A man who will do all my will, who is set to study his Master's mind.

This is the type of person God is looking for. In Christian circles today, when he finds people who are so busy trying to serve him with their own brilliant idea, do you know what God is looking for? Do you know what God is looking for in our midst this evening? Not people with brilliant ideas, but people who are willing to become bond slaves. And say, Lord, what do you want me to do? That's a very spiritual thing to do.

That's why people find it difficult. Because it's more difficult to wait upon God and to know his will and to do that like a slave than to just run around and do something or the other for the Lord, just whatever comes into your mind. Jesus Christ, you remember as you read through the Gospel of John, how often he says, my hour has not yet come.

He never moved by people suggesting him to do this, that and the other. The motto of his life was, John 4.34, my fruit is to do the will of him who sent me. And if we could sum up the purpose of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ here to earth, in one sentence, here it is, it's not that he came to die for the sins of the world.

That's not all he came for. In one sentence, we could sum up everything that Jesus came on earth to do in this sentence, he came to do the will of his father. And dying for the sins of the world was a part of that will.

That is what Jesus came to do. And that's what he calls us to do. Jesus was not moved by human pressure.

People may have suggested this, that and the other. People may have told him, Lord, there's a great need of your ministry here. Why don't you please stay on? But he moved only by the voice of his father.

He lived as a bond slave to his father. And he lived and moved in his father's will. This is why at the end of three and a half years, he could say, Father, I have finished the work which you gave me to do.

John 17.4. I've often meditated on those words. And I wondered whether at the end of my life, I can look up to God and say, Lord, I've finished the work which you gave me to do. Or will I have to say, Lord, I've finished the work which so many people suggested that I should do for the Lord.

And I finished the work which my own brilliant mind thought I should do for the Lord. Is that what we shall say at the end of our lives? What could Paul say? I have finished my course. I have run the race.

Because he lived as a bond slave. And the most important thing about a servant is not that he runs here and there doing anything he likes, but that he does just what his master tells him to. Are you one like that? Do you know what it is to hear your master speaking to you and saying, go here, go there? This is what it means to be a slave.

Let me read you another piece of poetry. I am but a slave. I have no freedom of my own.

I cannot choose the smallest thing, nor even my way. I'm a slave, kept to do the bidding of my master. He can call me night or day.

Were I a servant, I could claim wages, freedom sometimes, anyway. But I was bought. Blood was the price my master paid for me.

And I am now his slave. And evermore will be. He takes me here.

He takes me there. He tells me what to do. I just obey.

That's all. I trust him too. This is the type of servant to whom God can commit his authority.

Brothers and sisters, this is a lesson that the busy Christian of the 20th century finds it very hard to learn. But until we are willing to learn it, we shall not know God's authority in our life. Unless we are willing to become born slaves of the Lord.

Say, Lord, I give up every right to run my own life, even in your work, as I like. I shall say no to my own will, morning, noon, and night. I shall follow in the footsteps of my heavenly Lord, who, when he was on earth, he kept saying, not my will, but thine be done.

You know, sin came into the world when man decided to follow his own self-will. And sin was eradicated when one walked on the earth who never said yes to his own will, who said no to his own will all the time in order that he might do the will of his Father. And no one can say that he is following in the footsteps of Jesus if he is not following in this way, saying no to his own will, saying yes to the will of the Father.

I believe this is one of the secrets of the early church. This is one of the reasons why heaven is such a happy place. You see, the angels there are born slaves.

If you ask what is the reason for such glory, such joy and peace and victory in heaven, the answer is this. Heaven is a place where people do nothing but the will of God. The angels are not always running around doing this, that, and the other, whatever they feel like.

No. The angels are there waiting at the Father's throne, every one of them. And when God says, Michael, you do this, or Gabriel, you do that, instantly they go out and they obey.

They obey completely, they obey joyfully, and they do the will of God and they come back and stand in his presence. This is the reason for such joy, victory, peace, and glory in heaven. And this is how heaven can come down into our lives.

You know that chorus we sing, Heaven came down and glory filled my soul. It's easier to sing than to experience the reality of it in our lives. How can we experience the reality of that in our lives? Only if we have the atmosphere of heaven in our hearts.

If you are willing to be like those angels are before God, bond slaves, willing to do exactly what he calls them to do, having no right upon their own life. I remember hearing the story of a servant of God in the land of America called Dr. Walter Wilson. He had been converted, born again, and for many years he was not happy with his Christian life.

His life and his labors, he felt, were fruitless. He did not know victory in his life, he did not know fruit in his labors. One day he heard a preacher preaching on Romans 12.1, present your bodies a living sacrifice to God.

And that preacher said, God, the Holy Spirit, is looking for bodies that he can possess. You are to yield your body to the Holy Spirit of God that he can possess it. And Walter Wilson was convicted.

He went back to his room and he recognized that all these years he had been trying to use God. He had gone out here and tried to do something for God and said, God please help me and bless me as I do this work for you. Then he had gone out somewhere else and said, Lord, please bless this program that I've arranged for your work.

And all these years he recognized he had been using God. And he fell on his face and he said, Lord, I've treated you like a servant. I'm sorry.

From now on, I'm going to be your servant. Till now, I have tried to use you. From now on, you can use me.

From the crown of my head to the soles of my foot, every part of this body is yours. It is yours from now onwards till eternity. I have no more claim upon this body.

You can take this body, every part of it, and you can send it as a missionary to Africa or you can keep it at home with cancer. That's exactly as you like. It's your body.

You can send it to Greenland or blind the eye. You can send it to Tibet or leave it at home with TB. This is your body.

You can do what you like with it. You know, he gave his body completely over to God and he testifies of the marvelous change that this brought in his life from that day onwards. He reached a turning point in his life where he stopped using God and he became a bond slave.

He said, Lord, I don't want to just run around here and there doing something or the other for you. Here I am. What will you have me to do? I have no right upon my own life.

A man who submits to the authority of God over his life like that will have the authority of God in his life and ministry. This is what Paul meant when he said that he was a bond slave. He says in Romans 1, verse 1 also, that he was called to be an apostle.

A bond slave of Jesus Christ called to be an apostle. He gave up the right to his own life and he fulfilled that specific task to which God called him. God called him to be an apostle and he fulfilled his task as an apostle.

He did not try to be something else. On the road to Damascus, God gave him a great and a glorious vision, not just a physical vision, but a spiritual vision of the type of ministry that he was calling Paul to. He said, Paul, I am calling you to a ministry where you are going to deliver people from Satan's bondage and open blind eyes.

And you know, Paul never gave up that calling. He never degenerated into becoming a millionaire from the high calling of being a servant of God. He never degenerated into being something other than what God called him to be.

He did not choose the good and thus reject God's best. That's what many Christians are doing today. They see something good and thereby miss God's best.

But not Paul. He was a bond slave. He had no choice as to what he should be.

God said he ought to be an apostle. He became an apostle. He didn't want to be anything else.

And he labored. He called himself a laborer in God's vineyard. He never degenerated to the position of an administrative director sitting behind a desk typing letters and sending them out.

He was a laborer in God's vineyard right till his dying day. He never came down and began to serve tables when God had called him to give himself continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. This is the mistake that so many people are making today.

They are not what God is calling them to be. 1 Corinthians chapter 12 says that every member in the body of Christ has some function. And we can never have the authority of God in our lives unless we know the ministry to which God is calling us.

And we fulfill that ministry. And we are content with that ministry and we don't want to be somebody else. There are too many people in the Christian church today looking at somebody else and trying to be like that person.

Not satisfied with the ministry God has given them. And there are others whom God calls to something high and they degenerate to something much lesser. God calls them to his service and they go into something else.

Something lower. When God calls us to his service everything else is lower. Now this is what we need to recognize.

If we are bond slaves then we have no right to choose what we are to be. We accept what God wants us to be. We have no questions and we are quite content with the ministry that the Lord calls us to.

The trouble with the Christian church today is there are too many paralyzed members. Too many paralyzed members in the body who are not fulfilling their function. And this is the reason why so many others, other members are doing well.

Just imagine if my left hand were paralyzed my right hand would have to do the work of two hands. That's the trouble with the Christian church today. There are so many paralyzed members who are not fulfilling their function.

Who are not bond slaves. They are sermon tasters in conventions. They are singers in the choir.

But they are not fulfilling the ministry to which God has called them. They are not seeking to be witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ. They are like paralyzed members.

And so many other members in the church have to do the work of these people. I've heard it said that many a modern church is like a football game where there are eleven people on the field desperately in need of rest and ten thousand people in the stand desperately in need of exercise. That's the condition of many a church.

Why? Because people are not bond slaves. They have not said Lord, I have no right to live this life as I like. I have no ambition outside of your will.

I have no desire to make money or to become big or famous. I have no desire to get married to the person I like. I have no right to my life.

How many Christians are there who have come to that place? Who have given up every right that they think they have upon their life? They have not recognized that this is what Jesus Christ demands of them. And because that has not been recognized the church today lacks the authority that the Lord wants her to have. Let me just say this final thing about Paul.

And that was in his attitude to his master as a bond slave. He had the habit, as I said, like the messenger boy sitting outside the master's office. He sat and listened to what his master had to tell him.

He knew the scriptures. He knew the will of God revealed to him in the scriptures thoroughly. And then he had the habit of listening to what his master told him.

And he spoke that word faithfully, fearlessly. At the end of three years' ministry in Ephesus he could turn around and tell the elders I have not hesitated to declare to you the full counsel of God. He was not afraid of any face.

He did not compromise his message. Lest that rich man there get offended. He did not speak a little more smoothly about sin.

Lest that influential person over there leave the membership of the church. He was not bothered by such things that many a modern preacher is bothered by. He was fearless.

He was a bond slave and he did not care for the face of man. What his master told him he spoke without fear and without favor. And it did not matter which rich man left the church and went out.

It didn't matter which influential man got offended and kicked ball on the face. It didn't bother him one bit. He was going to be faithful.

And this was the reason why God could commit his authority to such a man. Here was a man who was a bond slave. What his master told him he declared faithfully.

He was a true prophet. One of the greatest needs in the church of Jesus Christ today. People who stand in the pulpit who fear the face of no man.

Who have so stood in the presence of God and learned to fear him that they do not fear any man. Who are not dependent on some man paying them. And therefore they have to suit their message to the taste of this man who is giving them their monthly salary.

You know Paul was not professional like that. He was a prophet. He was not a religious scribe or a religious manager or a promoter of a certain work.

Oh no. He was not a salesman for Christianity. No.

He was a prophet because he was a bond slave. He heard and he spoke. And we need men today who hear.

And I urge you young people develop this habit. Listening to what God has to say. If you are willing to give up completely every right that you have to your life and say Lord I'll be your bond slave.

I believe we shall know something of the authority that Paul had when he stood before Felix. That king who had the power to speak a word and release Paul from his imprisonment. Paul was not going to compromise.

Paul was not going to say smooth words that would make the king release him. No. The Bible says that Paul preached in such a way that Felix sitting in his throne began to tremble when Paul spoke of righteousness and self-control and judgment to come.

And also Paul was a man who not only spoke fearlessly before heathen and unconverted kings. He also spoke fearlessly to his co-workers when they were in the wrong. There was a man when he saw his co-worker Peter an apostle compromising.

He withstood Peter to his faith and said brother Peter you are wrong. You are compromising. Where are the bond slaves of the Lord like that in our day.

Who are not all the time trying to be diplomatic. Who are not all the time trying to beat around the bush. Who are not bothered about what people think about them.

Who are not cutting in favor with others. But who are seeking to be faithful to their master. Who have recognized they have no right upon their life.

They have given themselves completely lock, stock and barrel. From the crown of their head to the soles of their feet to the Lord for him to do what he likes with them. I believe if we give ourselves to God like that when we come to the end of our lives we shall be able to say like Paul I have fought a good fight.

I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. On the other hand if we try and live this watered down diluted Christianity that we find all over the world today we shall find in eternity we look back and regret over a wasted fruitless life when God wanted to do great things through us.

May the Lord speak to us.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/26/SID26042.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/secret-of-pauls-authority-1-paul-was-a-bondslave/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net