

The Way To Astonishing Faith

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of faith and submission to authority, drawing insights from the stories of Jesus being astonished at unbelief and faith. It highlights the need to astonish Jesus with our faith by acknowledging our unworthiness and being under authority. The sermon stresses the significance of obedience, respect for authority in the home, church, and society, and the impact of rebellion against authority. It concludes with a call to submit to authority, following the example of Jesus and the sons of Korah.

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Scripture: Mark 6:6, Matthew 8:10, Hebrews 13:17, Numbers 16:31, Psalms 46:1, Luke 10:19, Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:1, Jude 1:11, John 15:26, 1 Corinthians 11:3

Topics: "Faith", "Submission to Authority"

Description

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Transcript

There are two places in the Gospels where it says Jesus was astonished. It's the same word in the original Greek that is used on the day of Pentecost when people heard them speaking in tongues and it says in Acts 2.7 they were amazed and astonished. How is it these Galileans are we are hearing in our own language? I mean if I was speaking here in English and all of you heard in your own mother tongue what I was saying you'd be absolutely astonished.

What is it that astonished Jesus? One would think he would never be astonished but two places and only two places in the Gospels it says Jesus was marveled and amazed and astonished. I want to show them to you. One is in Mark chapter 6. You know he came to his hometown, Mark chapter 6 and he went into the synagogue.

It was Nazareth and the people despised him. Ah we knew him as a carpenter here for so many years. The son of Mary, verse three, brother of James, chose Judas Simon.

His sister's also here. They took offense at him and Jesus said to them a prophet is not without honor except in his own hometown and among his own relatives. It has been true throughout history that a prophet is not usually appreciated by his own relatives and therefore he could not do any miracle there except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them and he was astonished at their unbelief.

He was astonished. How can people be so unbelieving after all that they have seen just because they are prejudiced. That's not what I want to see.

I want you to see the other place where Jesus was astonished. That's in Matthew chapter 8. May we read of a centurion. Matthew 8 verse 5. Came to Jesus and implored him saying Lord my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented and Jesus said I will come to him and heal him and the centurion said Lord I'm not worthy for you to come under my roof but just say the word my servant will be healed.

For I also am a man under authority with soldiers under me. I say to this one go and he goes to another come and he comes to my slave do that and he does it. What he's saying is I know that you just speak the word he'll be healed.

When Jesus heard this he was astonished. Same word as in Acts chapter 2. They were astonished. Jesus was astonished.

This time he was astonished at this man's faith. In Mark 6 he was astonished at these people with whom he had grown up for 30 years. He was astonished at their unbelief and now he's astonished at the faith of a man who has never read the bible, never gone to synagogue, worshipped some heathen god, gone into the military and killed so many people.

A military captain. His faith. Jesus was astonished and said to all those who were around him I say to you truly I have not found such great faith with all of you bible studying, bible knowing Israelites.

That challenges me. There were only two things that astonished Jesus. Unbelief and faith.

He's astonished when he sees unbelief among his people today. After all that we read in the scriptures, after all that we have heard of Christian testimony from so many people and after all that the Lord has done in your life in past years you come into a difficult situation and you're in a panic. What will happen? Will God care for me? And Jesus he's the same yesterday, today and forever.

He is astonished at your unbelief. Have you forgotten all that he did for you in the past? Do you think he will carry you halfway across the river and dump you and say I'm fed up I didn't know you were that bad. He's astonished.

And equally he's astonished when he can see faith in somebody and I'll tell you that this that faith is not necessarily found in the people who know the bible the best or the people who have studied the scriptures. It can be in some heathen person who trusts in Jesus whose knowledge of the bible is very little. How much did the centurion know? I want to ask you my brothers when I read this what comes to my heart is this.

I say Lord in years past I have astonished you by my unbelief in numerous situations. I'm ashamed of it. I want to now try and astonish you a few times by my faith.

Isn't that a good goal to have? Lord Jesus I want to try and astonish you by my faith. Trust you for great things. It's possible for all of us.

It's amazing what God can do if we trust him and what he cannot do when we don't trust him. We can say unbelief ties the hands of almighty God. He wants to do something for you but he can't.

It's so important. God places so much value on faith that it says without faith it is impossible to please God no matter what else you may do. Everything must come out of faith.

If it doesn't come out of faith it's worthless. That helpless dependence upon God that is faith. The total confidence in God.

He will not let me down. He can do it. Confidence and dependence.

So let's look at the reason why this man had this faith and I want to see I want you to see this. First of all he said Lord verse 8, I am not worthy for you to come under my roof. He had such a tremendous respect for the Lord Jesus that when Jesus said I will come and heal him he said no Lord.

I mean we would think it's such an honor if Jesus said I will come to your house but he says Lord I'm not worthy that such a great person like you should come to my house. You see there his humility. You see his humility in the fact that he was willing to travel all the way from wherever he was to Capernaum for the sake of his servant.

I mean if you have a maidservant working in your house how many miles will you travel to go and get some healing for her from some doctor? And it says he implored Jesus and plead with the doctor and say I have a maidservant at home will you please come and heal her? I don't know how many of you would do that for your servant. I say that's lower caste. I don't know how to care for them.

This man was the ruler. Rome was the ruler of the world. He was a centurion, a captain of a hundred people of the biggest superpower in the world of that time but he cared for his servant.

He was a humble man, had low thoughts about himself. One would think that people who are in the military and all that are usually pretty proud. Well most of them are but this man was not.

He said Lord I'm not worthy. It's that respectful reverence for Jesus and the recognition that I'm nothing, I don't deserve God's goodness that is the first step to genuine faith. And it's because we don't have that that we don't have faith.

We have to start with humility. We heard that earlier today John 5. How can you believe when you receive honor from men? When you seek glory from men? How can you have faith? I wonder if that is the position we take when we come to the Lord Jesus. I want to tell you my dear brothers and sisters that we are living in a day when reverence for God is going down.

There is not the reverence for God today even among Christians that there should be. Today's Christians are musicians and workers but not worshipers. Worship is a rare thing.

Very few people know what it is to worship God in reverence. Very few know what it is today to fall with their face down before God like Job fell down and worshiped. Like Abraham fell down on his face down and worshiped.

Like John the Apostle fell down before God and worshiped. Do you ever do that? It's a wonderful thing to do. I love it sometimes just to lie flat on my bed before God and worship him my face down.

That is such a rare thing to see nowadays. And very few preachers are worshipers and that's the reason why there's no so much shallowness in Christendom. If you're not a worshiper you can't serve God all right.

And the worshiper is one who recognizes I'm not worthy. Lord thou alone are worthy. I don't deserve that you should do all this for me.

It's not that we have low self-esteem. There's you know some people think humility means I think I'm good for nothing, I'm useless. No, the most the humblest man that walked on this earth was Jesus Christ.

And he never went around saying oh I'm rotten, I'm useless, I'm good for nothing. That is not humility, that is stupidity. Did Jesus ever say I'm rotten, I'm good for nothing, I'm useless? No, and I don't say that either.

I say Lord I'm not worthy of your mercies. I'm a child of God. I believe I'm a son of the king of kings.

I don't have any low self-esteem, but when I come before God my face is down on the dust before him. That reverence is unfortunately not there. And you can see that in the type of hymns being written nowadays by people compared to the hymns written in the olden days by God-fearing people.

There's a spirit of reverence in some of those old hymns. Today's a lot of today's hymns lack that. Maybe very musical and sounds nice and repeat the same line 10 times etc.

But that spirit of reverence is not there. And most Christians can't even detect that because they don't have the spirit of reverence themselves. The sentimental frothy love for Jesus type of thing, it doesn't change lives.

Look at your own defeated life despite singing all these wonderful hymns and songs. It cannot be like that if there was genuine reverence. Reverence of the Lord brings wisdom, brings freedom from sin.

That is wisdom. It's the beginning of wisdom. And I love to sing some of the old hymns and I sing it often to myself when I'm alone.

Some hymns that are not ever sung in any churches, hymns of reverence to God. And among the well-known authors, I think the last one I've ever read who knew anything about worship was Tozer and he died about 50 years ago. All the others talk about evangelism and healing and this that and the other.

Hardly anybody who knows what worship is. And Jesus made it very clear, you must worship, thou shalt worship and thou shalt serve the Lord thy God, Matthew 4 10. And that is the spirit of this centurion, a respect.

Jesus stands out as different from all the others. I was thinking of this the other day when I was reading John 21. It says in John 21 that the disciples were fishing.

It's the last chapter, the last miracle that Jesus did. And they were fishing and they didn't catch anything. And when it was daybreak, John 21 4, Jesus stood on the beach.

And the disciples did not know it was Jesus. They saw a man standing on the beach. And he said to them, children, do you have any fish? Do you? They said, no.

He said, cast the net on the right hand and you'll get a catch. And they cast and it was so heavy because the great number of fish. Then John, the apostle, turned to Peter and said, it is the Lord.

And Simon Peter, this is the passage I really like. When he heard it, he put on his shirt. Because he had taken off his shirt because he was working as a fisherman.

All those fishermen were without their shirts, bare chested. And he said, I cannot go and meet the Lord like this. I have to put on my shirt.

I can be with John and Thomas and all bare chested, but not before Jesus. Why not? There's something there which strikes me. He put on his shirt before he went to meet Jesus.

He respected him. You know, the clothes we wear show our respect for the people we are going to meet in those clothes. He put on his clothes and then jumped into the sea.

I say, Lord, I want to have that spirit. I don't want to treat you like some old buddy of mine whom I can just put my arm around and say, hi, Jesus. Like a lot of Christians today think that they are being friendly.

It's because of a total lack of reverence. No wonder we don't have faith. This Roman centurion had more of that.

Lord, I'm not worthy. I don't deserve anything from you. I wonder whether we realize this.

Jesus told us there was a title that we could get. You know, people love titles, titles, especially in Christendom today. Somebody calls himself reverent and somebody calls themselves right reverent.

And then when there are so many right reverends around and somebody has to show that he's even higher than them, he'll call himself right reverend doctor. His grace, his excellency. These are all Christian titles.

Here's another title Jesus said we could have. Luke 17, verse 10. Luke 17, verse 10.

When you have done every single thing that I have commanded you, and that'll take some time. When you have done every single thing that I've commanded you, then you can take this title. I am an unworthy slave.

I'm an unprofitable servant. Do you want that title? How many people want that title? In the midst of all the reverends and right reverends and doctors? This title is not so easy to get. You have to do everything that Jesus has commanded you.

And when you have done every single commandment that I have given you, then you get this title. I am an unworthy slave. I have only done what I should have done.

I've not done anything extra. I tell you, my brothers and sisters, we need that spirit. Back in Christendom.

And we need that spirit in our churches. There's too much of shallowness in our young people and in the older people. Where is that sense of reverence and respect among our elder brothers? I hope there is.

I don't know all of your lives. But I tell you, we have lost everything if we have lost reverence for God. I don't care if I lose my gift of preaching, I lose my voice, or I've often said, Lord, if you take away my voice that I can never speak again, I take away my health, I have to lie down paralyzed in bed.

There's one thing I can still do, which is the main thing I want to do in any case, I can worship you. So, I won't be discouraged. I will not be discouraged because if I'm locked up in some prison for preaching the gospel, I can be a worshiper.

Who in the world can stop me from being a worshiper? Nobody. And if that is what you long for, I'll tell you, I'm just trying to get acclimatized to heaven. Because that's what I'm going to do for all eternity.

I'm not going to be preaching there. I'm not even going to pray. I'm going to worship for all eternity.

And so, I want to get acclimatized to my home, my future home. And they sing one song there, Thou alone art worthy, O Lord. Many times I picture this, I use my imagination to picture this crowd of millions of people in heaven.

And I'm just lost in the middle of those millions somewhere, one little dot in the middle, and everybody's saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord. Thou art worthy, O Lamb. Nobody's special.

Zak Poonen is not special in heaven. He's a nobody. Paul is not special.

So, dear brothers and sisters, use your imagination. It's not pretense. It's actually going to happen.

I long to be in that place where I'll be a nobody, worshiping the Savior, who alone deserves all honor and praise. Always take the position this Roman centurion took, I am not worthy. I'm not worthy of the least of Thy mercies.

You know, when you come to that place, I'll tell you something, all grumbling, murmuring, complaining will be eliminated from your life permanently. You wonder why you cannot get rid of those sins? It's because you think you deserve something. Come to the place where you recognize you deserve nothing.

If I ask God to give me what I deserve, it's hell. Don't ever ask God to give you what you deserve. It's dangerous.

Hell. Lord, give me what I don't deserve. I'm not worthy.

I believe it's the worshipers who have the maximum faith. And to help us to come to this place, all you need to do is remember your past life. I do that frequently, I'll tell you honestly, very frequently when I'm by myself.

I don't know what thoughts you think when you're by yourself. People think all types of thoughts when they're by themselves. When I'm free from other thinking, one of the thoughts I think about is all the wretched things I ever did in my life, from as far back as I can remember, from my childhood, unconverted days after conversion.

I remember them, remember them, remember them. Is it right to remember it? I don't feel guilty about any of those things, because it is all cleansed in the blood of Jesus Christ. Now if you're not sure that the blood of Jesus has cleansed all your past life, please don't think about it.

It'll make you guilty, it'll make you condemn yourself, you'll get into all types of problems. I'm only speaking to those who believe that they've confessed all their past sins, that every sin has been cleansed in the blood of Christ and to believe that Jesus says your sins and your iniquities, I will remember no more. If you're sure of that, then come to this next step.

Otherwise don't come there. And the next step is, remember those sins. And it says, I'll tell you why.

It says in second Peter chapter 1 and verse 9. I want to paraphrase this verse to you, second Peter chapter 1 and verse 9. If you forget all your past sins, you will become blind spiritually or short-sighted. Do you want to be blind spiritually? Just never think about your past sins, and you'll be the blindest among all the believers. God has opened my spiritual eyes to see amazing truths in scripture.

I'm not blind because I remember my past sins, which have all been cleansed, which God says He will not remember. But I will not forget them, because it says if I forget it, I'll be blind. And why do I remember it? So that I can fall on my face before God and say, I'm not worthy.

So that I can be saved from spiritual pride. So that I can be saved from thinking that I deserve something from God. I remember years ago, when I was praying for something, I don't know what it was, something earthly for me or my family or something, I was praying.

And I said something like this to God. I said, Father, I have tried selflessly to serve you for so many years. Can you do this little thing for me or my family? God said no, won't do it.

Because you're coming in your own worthiness. I have done something for you. Then you're coming in your name.

That day, I understood a little more of what it means to come in the name of Jesus. So never again do I pray like that. Now I say, Lord, not because of who I am or what I did, but because Jesus died for a sinner like me.

Jesus died for a wretch like me. Can you do this for Jesus sake? The Lord says sure, I'll do it. Very often, we think God owes us something because we have done something for Him.

And a lot of charismatic Christianity teaches us that give your money to God, God will bless you, as if God owes us something. What am I giving to God? What He gave me. What do you have that you did not receive from God? Are you doing a great favor to God, even if you give 10% of your income? Who gave it to you in the first place? Who gave you the ability to earn money? Don't any of you think that if you gave a large offering to God, it was a fantastic thing you did? Absolute rubbish.

You gave a small teeny-weeny bit of what God gave you. No, that's not the way. To recognize I deserve nothing.

And if I get anything, it's undeserved. Lord, I am not worthy that you should come to my house. I'm not worthy that you should be my friend.

I'm not worthy that you should call me your servant. I'm not worthy of anything. I'm not worthy, Lord.

And the more I take that place, faith increases. That is the first step. And as I said, the thing that will help me is to recognize my past sins.

You see, because this business of worthiness, feeling worthy, is because we compare ourselves with other believers. I don't know the past sins you committed. I'm sure that some of you committed some terrible things in your younger days, in your past life, which you would be absolutely, you'd like to run out of this hall, if it was portrayed on the screen.

You, who now have a reputation as a holy man, holy woman, and elder brother, all this type of reputation, if your past life was portrayed on the screen, you would have to hide your face and run. Isn't that right? God doesn't do it. He's so good.

He's blotted it out. He says, I will not remember your past sins and I will not reveal it to anybody else either. That's just between you and me.

So, don't have high thoughts about yourself. Remember your past sins and recognize how good God is, that He doesn't reveal it to other people. And learn something from that, that you don't go revealing other people's past sins to other people.

I'm surprised at people whose own past sins are so terrible and God has covered it up, that they so glibly, glibly go and reveal other people's sins to other people, for no purpose at all. So-and-so is like this and so-and-so did this and so-and-so said this. Brother, who are you talking so much about the evil of other people? Let me tell, tell me something about your past life.

How did you live in your teenage days? Tell me what all you were involved in, before you find fault with, pick out little specks from people's eyes. Remember your past sins, I would exhort all of you. Don't ever forget what you were purified from.

And that's the reason for a lot of blindness among Christians, blindness of this lack of spiritual vision. They're not able to see Jesus clearly. They're not able to see the scriptures clearly.

Start here. Lord, I'm not worthy. And Jesus will be astonished at your faith one day.

I want to astonish Jesus with my faith. Trust him for great things. I want to have a, I don't want to feel that I'm superior to the servant who works in my house, if I have one.

I'm not superior to the lowest level of person from the lowest level of society. I'm equal to him. And like the centurion who would seek to help this man from such, who is a slave in his house.

Slaves had no rights in those days. They were not even given a salary, but he cared for him. I say, Lord, because he felt God has been so good to me, I must be good to this poor man.

I say, Lord, I always want to be like that. God has been so good to me, and I want to be good to the people around me. I don't want to think that they are beneath me or some believer who's weak or somebody who doesn't, who's young.

I want to have a low estimate of myself. Lord, I'm not worthy. That's the first step.

Then the second thing in Matthew chapter 8, verse 9 is, I am. One is I am not, and the other is I am. Verse 8, I am not worthy.

Then what are you? I am a man under authority. That's the second thing that produces faith in us. And that's the second thing that's missing in today's Christianity, to be under authority.

A lot of people think that's disgraceful to be under authority. People in the military don't think so. Every man in the military is under authority, and it's because he's under authority that he has authority.

You see, the captain is under the colonel, the colonel is under the general, and they all have authority or people beneath them, because they are under authority over people above them. You know, the Bible speaks about that type of a chain of authority. A church is an army, and there's a chain of authority.

I'm under authority. Let me show you one scripture in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. It says, Paul says in verse 3, I want you to understand this chain of authority.

He said, I want you people to understand this. It's a very fundamental truth that there's a chain of authority here. It starts with God.

Verse 3, the last part, God is the head of Christ. You see a general, colonel, captain, lieutenant, soldier, like that. God beneath him, Christ beneath him.

Christ is the head of man. Man is the head of woman. It's exactly like the army.

He said, I want you to understand this. Every woman who refuses to recognize that God in his great wisdom made her a woman, is rebelling against authority. He says, I want to be equal.

It's like the captain telling the general, hey, who said you're above me? I'm equal to you. You might as well tell God, I'm equal to you. Christendom also has not understood what it means to be under authority.

It's a chain of command. And do you know that is the reason why your sisters cover your head? It says here, this chapter is about covering the head. The sister puts a veil on her head to say, I accept that authority.

Now, you may put the veil over your head and not submit to your husband, then you're telling a lie. But that is God's plan, that there must be a chain of authority. And that is why this whole section of women veiling their head is such a controversial issue in Christendom today.

I'm not surprised. Who do you think has produced that controversy? The devil. Because he knows that if you come under authority, you'll have authority over him.

He doesn't want you to have authority over him. I want to have authority over Satan. That's why I want to be under Christ's authority completely myself.

The centurion said, because I'm under authority, I have authority. When I tell a servant to go, he goes. When I tell a servant, another one to come, he comes.

When I tell my slave, do this, he does it. I've often thought about this in casting out demons. I've seen a lot of preachers and pastors casting out demons, yelling and screaming and pulling the woman's hair and shouting and yelling and going on for hours and hours and hours and hours.

And then the demon finally pulls the thing that he's left. He hasn't left. And I've thought about that.

I said, do I ever see Jesus pulling people's hair and shouting and yelling and screaming? And never. I said, this is not the godly way. Jesus was under the authority of his father.

He'd say to a demon, get out. And he didn't have to say it twice. It's like saying, go to a servant, go.

He'd go. Supposing the centurion rebelled against his boss and was thrown out of the army. And then one day he sees that soldier and says, go.

And the soldier says, who are you? Why? Because he rebelled against authority and was thrown out of the army. The soldier says, I don't want to listen to you now. But when he was in the army, if he said, go, he'd go.

Authority is a tremendous thing. You don't have to be strong to have authority. You see that in the places where there's no traffic light, but a policeman in the olden days, we used to have policemen standing in the middle of the crossroads and putting up his arm.

And these huge trucks that can run down anybody would stop. Because one small little man is putting up his hand and saying, stop. Isn't that amazing? That one little man can make 10 trucks stop.

Does he have strength, power? No. He's got authority. Authority is greater than power.

If you were to ask that policeman, can you stop that truck physically? No, I don't have that power. But I've got authority. That guy dare not move till I tell him to move.

Yeah. In the world, they recognize authority. In the church, unfortunately not.

And that's the reason why the church doesn't have so much authority. So many people talking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. I believe in all of them.

But I believe more important is authority. Authority. I believe there's a great need for authority in the pulpit.

That when people speak, they must speak with authority. Not a human type of authority where you bang the table and try to shout at people, but a spiritual authority, a quiet authority that God backs up. It says in John chapter 15.

It's been a great verse for me as one who preaches God's Word. It says in John 15 and verse 26 and 27. When the helper, the Holy Spirit comes, who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about me and you will testify also.

I like that. That means I understand it like this. I speak about Jesus and the Holy Spirit backs it up and says, listen to that.

That's for me. That's authority. I want that.

Whenever I speak, when I counsel people as an elder, when I stand in a pulpit and speak God's Word, I want the Holy Spirit to take that word to people's heart and say, listen to that. That's from God. And those who have ears to hear will recognize that is from God.

You can have that. Don't you want that authority? Every believer should have that authority. See what Jesus said in Luke's gospel, chapter 10.

Luke chapter 10. Verse 19. I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions over all the power of the enemy and nothing will injure you.

I have given you authority over power. The truck has got power. The policeman's got authority.

The devil's got power. I've got authority. I've got authority over his power.

That's what it says here. I've given you authority over all the power of Satan and he cannot touch you, cannot harm you in any way. Didn't he kill the apostles? Sure, when God's time for them was up.

And through the death of God's people, many others were converted. The devil got Stephen killed. He got rid of one man.

But Paul, seeing that, got convicted and finally got converted. So, the devil didn't win by killing Stephen. He just produced a wholehearted apostle as a result.

The devil can never win. God always turns the tables on Satan. He has given us authority over all the power of the enemy.

But to have that authority, we have to be under authority. That's why the Bible says, God has given only one commandment for children. He doesn't burden little children with many commandments.

He just says, honor your father and mother, children obey your parents. That's it. And that is the one thing that most children don't do.

And unfortunately, that's the one thing that many parents don't teach their children to do. We have to teach our children obedience almost from the time they are born. You have to obey.

I never cared if my children broke things in my house. I never valued things in my house. I never cared if my children broke things.

But I did, I was concerned if any of my boys did not obey me. That was serious. Because if I allowed that, they would one day grow up to disobey God.

When they are one year old, they don't know anything about God. But they certainly know that I'm their dad. And I'm there in place of God.

Until they grow up to know God. Do you know that until your children grow up to know God themselves, you are representative of God over there. And the one thing you have to teach your children is obedience.

It doesn't matter if they're not good at mathematics and physics, but they must be good at obedience. Then you would have trained them better. I've read somewhere that the generation of hippies who rebelled against their parents in the 1960s and 70s in western countries in America grew up because 20 years earlier there was a very popular book in America on bringing up children written by a doctor.

Which is the most popular book on taking care of children in which he taught, don't spank your children, don't punish them. 20 years later, you have a generation of hippies and rebels against their parents. I read that somewhere.

And that has spread. What does the Bible say? Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise, Ephesians 6 verse 2 and 3, so that it may be well with you, so that you may live long on the earth. All those who do not teach their children to obey are saying I don't want it to go well with my children.

I don't want them to live long on the earth. Let them die an early death. Let it not go well with them.

I desperately wanted it to go well with all my children. And so I decided I'm going to teach them to obey me. And the obedience is of course external in the beginning.

The inward obedience comes a little later, but it has to begin on the outside. You have to listen to daddy and mommy. The Bible says in Proverbs 22 and verse 15, foolishness or rebellion is bound up in the heart of a child.

I mean if you believe this is inspired scripture from God, I believe it. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will remove it far from him. Yeah, there's a inward connection between the backside and the heart.

And you connect with the backside and goes up to the heart and the rebellion is driven. I don't know how it's done, but it works. And you know that's why God has given a little extra fat in the backside, so that children don't get hurt.

That's why you shouldn't hit them anywhere else. There's a purpose. God is wisdom.

The rod of discipline will drive it far from him. Wow. I want it to be removed far from him.

I want all the foolishness and rebellion in my children's hearts to be removed far away. And Lord, if you've shown me a way, I'll do it. We do it in love.

We don't do it because we hate them. We don't do it because you're angry. We do it because we love them so much.

We want it to go well with them when they grow up. We want them to grow up to be servants of God. And so, with tears, we beat them because we teach them to be under authority.

Are your children under your authority? If they are, one day they'll grow up to respect God's authority. I'm not here to judge parents whose children are not listening to God. That's not my business.

I don't judge anybody. But the Bible says, train up a child. In the same chapter, it says, train up a child in the way he should go.

And when he's old, he will not depart from it. It says that very clearly in Proverbs, in chapter 22, in verse 6. Is that scripture? Is it true or not? If I train up a child in the wrong way, when he's old, he will not depart from it. He'll go in the wrong way.

If I train up a child in the right way, when he's old, he will not depart from it. He'll go in the right way. So, when a child goes in the wrong way, what shall we say? Oh, the father was a good father, but the scripture is wrong.

I mean, scripture doesn't always apply, you know. I don't say that. Let God be true, and every man a liar.

Let God be true, and every man a liar. As I said, I'm not here to judge anybody else. But I remember telling my own boys, I said, if any of you go astray, I will not blame you.

I'll blame myself. I said, I did not bring you up right, that's all. This business of authority is so important, and it begins in the home, and from the home in society.

That's why we must respect authority. In society, we've got to respect those who are in authority, and then in the church. And I tell you, there's just as much rebellion against authority in the church worldwide today as there is in homes.

The devil has got right into Christendom. And one proof of that is, there's no such thing as submission to authority. If you ever talk about submission to authority in a church, they say, oh, somebody wants to be a dictator.

I remember once asking a brother, who was one of these independent types, I said, brother, how do you obey Hebrews 13 verse 17? How do you obey this verse? Hebrews 13 verse 17. Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for that will be unprofitable for you.

Who are you supposed to obey there? He said, Jesus Christ. I said, but it says leaders. Who's the second one? One letter, S, makes all the difference.

Obey your leaders. Who are they? Because they are keeping watch over your souls, and they have to give an account to Jesus Christ. Do you have any leaders? Or you low unto yourself? The law of God is never planted churches without leaders in the New Testament.

Never. Every church had leaders, and the elders were appointed by apostles. They submitted to them.

That's why it says the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone. It's interesting how all these people who say we don't want any authority in the church, we just connection with Jesus. I say, will you allow your little three-year-old child to say that to you? I don't want any authority in the home.

I don't want your dad and mom. I don't want to listen to you. I'm going to be connected to Jesus.

What would you say to your three-year-old who says that? No, no, no. You're under our authority. But are you under authority in the church? No, no.

This inconsistency, that's what I don't understand. If you don't accept authority in the church, you should not have authority over your children at home. Who gave you that right to have authority over your children at home? The Bible, the same Bible tells you to obey your leaders.

It's a very serious thing to rebel against authority. In the book of Jude, it speaks about those who have perished in the rebellion of Korah. Jude verse 11, the last part, woe unto them.

The last part, it says they've gone and perished in the rebellion of Korah. Korah was the man who rebelled against Moses and the earth opened up and swallowed him up as a lifelong lesson to those who will rebel against authority. But I want you to turn to that place in Numbers 16 and have a look at what happened there.

It's very interesting to see it. In Numbers chapter 16, it says there were four people, Korah, Dathan, Abiram and On. Korah, Dathan, Abiram and On rose up against Moses, verse 2, and said, who do you think you are? And you've gone far enough and we're all holy.

We are all equal. Why do you exalt yourself? Verse 3. And Moses just fell on his face. That's what he always did.

He said, listen, fellas, I have no desire to rule over you. God made me an authority. What shall I do? Tomorrow the Lord will show, verse 5, who is holy.

And the next morning, you know who all came against Moses? We read in verse 24, Moses said, speak to the congregation, get back from the dwellings of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. What happened to On? What happened to the fourth guy who rebelled the previous day? He got some sense that night. He went to the other three fellas and said, brothers, you go wherever you want.

I'm not going to go into this business of rebelling against authority. And he saved his family. But these three were rebellious.

And Moses said, get back from around the dwellings of Korah. And the earth opened up and swallowed them up. But we read later on in Numbers, the sons of Korah did not die.

I think that's in Numbers 26. The sons of Korah did not die. Why is it? Because in the last minute, as Moses said, get away, the sons of Korah said, hey, dad, we're not going to stand with you.

We're going to stand with God's man. They stood against their own parents and stood with God's man. And they saved their lives.

Amazing. You know, what is the result of that? We read in Psalm. There are a number of Psalms written by the sons of Korah.

You read that Psalm 46, for example. God is our refuge and strength written by the sons of Korah. And even if the mountains roar and the earth is swallowed up, we will not be disturbed.

You get meaning in that Psalm when you realize who are the guys who wrote it. These people who stood with God's man. There's a principle in the New Testament.

You have authority when you submit to authority. It's very dangerous for God to give authority in the hands of a man. Who has never learned submission to authority.

The fundamental problem with a lot of people who want to be leaders and elders and pastors today is in their entire life, they've never submitted to anybody's authority. And God has never been able to break them and crush them by submission to authority. They've been independent.

They know so much of the Bible. They've got so much money. They've got a group of people who are following them.

They have started church. You just wait a few years and see what is going to be the condition of that church. It'll be striped division and confusion.

I can prophesy that. I've seen it happen again and again and again and again in many places. The reason, the leader was never broken by God.

He never submitted to authority. He knew the Bible. He could preach.

He could do this. He could organize. He had money.

Why did he need authority? And he tries to build a church. Jesus submitted to authority for 30 years to Joseph and Mary, imperfect people. And he was broken and crushed.

And then God said, now go out and exercise authority. Many people say, we want to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. Well, the first 30 years of his footsteps were submission to authority to Joseph and Mary.

Have you walked in those footsteps? And you want to exercise authority? That's why so many elders are total failures. That's why God doesn't bless the ministry in that church. There's nobody they submit to.

It's tragic. That's what's happening in Christendom today. Jesus was astonished at this man's faith.

How did his faith come? I am not worthy, but I am under authority. And I have authority. Dear brothers and sisters, I don't need to speak much on that.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear. You wives, your salvation is submission to your husband. I'll tell you that.

Even you elder brothers, do you ever listen to anyone who can give you a little advice? Or you feel you know everything yourself? Well, go ahead. You can discover this truth 20 years later when you made a mess of your life and a mess of your church, or you can learn it today and avoid wasting 20 years of your life. May God have mercy on all of us.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, as we seek to live this new covenant life, pouring new wine into new wineskins, help us to understand your ways, to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. This is what we want, Father, for everyone.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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