

Under Authority and Having Authority

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and submitting to God's authority over our lives, giving thanks in everything, and living a life of humility and spiritual growth.

Duration: 1:00:30

Scripture: 1 Samuel 3:19, Amos 5:13, Matthew 8:8, Luke 10:19, John 5:30, John 17:2, Ephesians 6:4, 1 Timothy 6:12

Topics: "Spiritual Authority", "Gods Will"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of living under God's authority, focusing on leading others to eternal life. It highlights the need to prioritize obedience to God's will, humility, and serving others over seeking authority over people or Satan. The speaker stresses the significance of having authority to guide others towards eternal life, correcting, disciplining, and instructing in the ways of the Lord. The ultimate goal is to live without fear of Satan, trusting in God's authority and leading others to eternal life.

Transcript

Praise the Lord. It's always good to have a spirit of thanksgiving at all times, not just when we come on Sundays, but every day. I'd like to share something that God has spoken to my own heart.

As some of you know, I completed 72 years a few days ago. I was seeking the Lord for a word, and the word that came to my heart was authority. Authority is a word that a lot of people in the world like.

They don't like to be under authority, but they like to have authority, whether it's mothers and fathers, or elders in a church, or dictators, or policemen, everybody. Even older brothers like to have authority over their younger ones. But when you, you know, the world's values are very often very different from the values of God's kingdom.

In fact, they're exactly the opposite, and that's signified by the fact that the devil became the devil because he wanted to go up and go higher, and higher, and higher, be equal with God. And salvation came by Jesus, who was equal with God, going lower, and lower, and lower, to the lowest depth a man could go, to the horrible death of a cross. So if you really want to understand spiritual authority, you need to keep these two pictures in your mind always.

Every spirit that seeks to lift you up and makes you want to go above others is of the devil, and every spirit that seeks to make you go down, not in self-abasement and low self-esteem, that is the devil's counterfeit

of humility, but going down to serve others, to get underneath others so that you can lift them up, that is the spirit of Christ. You need to distinguish between false humility, which is self-abasement, being a doormat for everybody to rub their feet on, low self-esteem, that's a counterfeit. Sometimes people understand humility like that because they don't look at Jesus.

They look for humility according to their own definition of it or in a dictionary. Jesus was not a doormat. Nobody could rub their feet on him.

Jesus didn't have a low self-esteem. He knew he was the Son of God, but he was a servant of others. He never felt it was beneath his dignity to wash people's feet.

I think if he was here, he'd be the first one to volunteer to clean the toilets and most probably would do it without anybody knowing it because he knew what he was before the Father. It's when we don't know who we are before God that we think all these lowly jobs are not good for us. That's the mark of a very insecure man who has a low self-esteem.

That's the person who's not willing to clean the toilets or sweep the floor or do lowly jobs. He's very, very insecure. He doesn't know God.

He's got low self-esteem. But a person who knows who he is is the Son of God. He has no problem doing anything.

So when you think of authority, I thought of it in three areas. First of all, in God's authority over us. And then in our authority over people and our authority over Satan.

So let's look at these three. Five years ago when I was seeking God again at the time of my birthday, the word the Lord spoke to my heart was from Luke chapter 10 and verse 19. There again, it was about authority.

Luke 10, 19, Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing will injure you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven. And it was especially through the message translation of that that God spoke to my heart.

Now, I want to say a word about translations and paraphrases. The New American Standard Bible is the one I use and I've used for more than 35 years for the study of God's word, because it's the most accurate translation I have ever come across in the language of today. And it's a word for word translation, so we can take its authority.

But when you come to a paraphrase like Living Bible or Message Bible, you can't use that to get a doctrine because it's not word for word translation. And sometimes it's the translator's understanding of a verse that he's giving, and it could be more like a commentary rather than a translation. But the advantage is it's much easier to read, and very often it throws light on a verse that you hadn't thought of earlier.

And that's happened to be many times when I've read Living Bible especially, which is even better than message translation. But both of them I use it often not to get a doctrine, remember, but to throw light. And then I go on a verse and then I go back to the verse in the translation and I say, hey, that was there and I didn't notice it.

Okay, now listen to that in the Message Bible, Luke 10, 19 and 20, and see how it speaks to your heart. You know, this is for you as well, if you take it, if you fulfill the conditions, it's for you. No one can put a hand on you.

That itself excites us. All the same, the great triumph for victory is not in your authority over evil or over Satan, but in God's authority over you. And you know the difference between your authority over evil and God's authority over you? And his presence with you.

That is the great victory. The great victory is not that you command a demon to go and it goes, but that God commands you to go and you jump and go. If you don't do that, to rejoice that I commanded a demon to go and it went immediately is crazy.

When God tells you to go, you go. That's the point. That's the great victory.

And again, the next verse, not what you do for God, but what God does for you. That's what you should rejoice in. Think of that.

Do you rejoice in what you have done for God? How often we're guilty of that. The Lord says, rejoice in what God has done for you. Not that you serve God by casting out demons, but that God has recorded your names in heaven.

You know, there's a lot in those two verses, if you can think about it. I've thought about it many times since that first time God spoke to my heart. I don't want to rejoice in my authority over demons.

I have always seen in casting out demons. I never have to yell. I never have to keep on saying it one word and the demons go.

You know what God speaks to me from that? Do you go when I speak one word to you? Or do I have to hear it twice and thrice before I move? And I say, Lord, I'm ashamed. I want to rejoice in your authority over me, not in my authority over sin or evil or Satan. That I'm tempted and I don't yield to it.

Not even once. That's great. That's my authority over evil.

We can rejoice in that. I got victory. I was not like the defeated Christians, and I'm not like I was in the olden days defeated, but that's not what I have to rejoice in.

I have to rejoice in God's authority over me. And that's so important, dear brothers and sisters. This is what, how Jesus lived his whole life.

He, I mean, 30 years, for example, he never cast out demons or preached, but he lived under God's authority. Totally. Whatever the father told him to do, he listened to this description, which he gives of his own life.

John chapter five and verse 30. I can do nothing on my own initiative. Initiative means I decide myself.

What does he mean? I can do nothing. You say, Lord, you can do nothing on your own. I can do a lot of things on my own.

Are you weaker than me? Why is it we can do so many things on our own without seeking God? The reason is in the next part of that verse, because the Lord says, I don't seek my own will, but the will of him

who sent me. That's why I can do nothing on my own initiative because I've decided in my life as a fundamental principle that I will never seek my own will or my own pleasure or what satisfies me or what pleases me or what gives me pleasure or what I enjoy doing, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. But I will only do what pleases my father, what he wants me to do, what excites him, not what excites me.

And because of that, because of that restraint that I have imposed upon myself, I can do nothing on my own initiative. Dear brothers and sisters, all our knowledge of scripture and all our imagined spirituality is just a lot of rubbish if we have not come to this type of life, or at least if we are not coming towards this type of life where I look up to God and say, my father, I never want to do my own will. I only want to do yours.

It's not something forced. He never forces us. He never puts a restraint upon us.

Till the end of our life, you can be filled with the spirit and the mightiest servant of God on earth. He will not take away your free will till the last day of your life on earth. If you want, you can go to hell.

In Pilgrim's Progress, if you read, right almost just before he reaches heaven, there's a by-path to hell from there. That man had light. You can get that close after coming to the cross and walk all that way, and then there's a by-path to hell from there.

So it's like that. Why? Because he never takes away our free will. People who say that once you've accepted Jesus, you'll never be lost, you have to say that God takes away your free will then.

It doesn't happen. He doesn't take away your free will. It's people who don't have an understanding of how much God respects a man's free will, who think that once you're saved, you're always saved.

That's up to you. You can be. I don't believe I'll be lost.

I'll tell you why. Because I don't plan to divorce Jesus Christ. He doesn't plan to divorce me.

I mean, I can even say that about my earthly marriage. I don't plan to divorce my wife. I can say that with absolute certainty.

I can, you know, bet a million dollars. I don't bet, but I do. I bet any amount I'd never divorce my wife.

She'll never divorce me. How much more I can say? I'll never divorce Jesus Christ. He'll never divorce me, but that's my personal choice.

But someone who plays the fool with Christ and the things of God, plays the fool with sin, he's already divorcing Christ. And if he imagines that he's once saved, he's always saved, he's just fooling himself. He'll wake up when he stands before the Lord and get such a terrible shock.

God never takes away our free will, but we voluntarily can choose like Jesus to say, I have decided never to seek my own will. As I understand it, I may not know the fullness of God's will, but in the area where I understand it, that's all God expects. You know, in third standard, you're expected to know only third standard stuff, not even fourth standard stuff.

Somebody else who's more mature is in the 10th standard. He knows a lot more. So God's will, there are increasing circles of understanding God's will as we grow.

And God doesn't expect you to live according to the light I have. If my light is more than yours, he expects more from me than from you. But in the circle in which you know what is God's will, if you say, I always want to do your will, I'll tell you when I started taking the Christian life seriously, many years after I was born again, one of the areas where I really sought to do God's will, I did not know God's will in many areas as a young Christian, because I didn't know how to find God's will in certain areas.

But there was one area where I knew God's will crystal clear. And I'll tell you why. And if I submitted to that, that was the proof that I accepted God's authority over my life.

And that's because that was written very clearly in scripture. In 1 Thessalonians 5 and verse 18. 1 Thessalonians 5 and verse 18, it says, In everything, give thanks for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Oh, I said, Lord, that's wonderful. At least one area, I know for certain what your will is. There may be a thousand areas where I don't know your will, but this one area, it's clear.

I have to give thanks in every situation, whatever happens. However, people treat me, whether they insult me or praise me. It's important that we give thanks to God, even when people praise us.

Otherwise, we will accept that praise to ourselves. It's important that we give thanks to people when people criticize us, because that is God's way of humbling us. It's good for us.

We have a tremendous tendency to go up, you know, God has to push us down. Otherwise, he won't be able to give us grace because he gives grace only to the humble. One way he humbles us is by allowing people to criticize you, speak evil of you, backbite against you, and get upset with you, and get angry with you, and yell at you publicly, and humiliate you, and all those things.

Do you accept that joyfully? Give thanks, because you say, Lord, thank you. You saw a tendency in me to be puffed up, and so you allowed people to insult me, and hurt me, and injure me, so that I could go down, so you could give me grace. I rejoice in it.

I give thanks. How much you have missed, my brothers and sisters. How much you have missed in your life so far, are the treasures of God, by not giving thanks in everything.

You can start today. I mean, you can't do anything about the past. If you've lived 50 years not doing this, 50 years have been lost.

Don't ask God to give it back to you. You can't get it. You can't get back the year 2010.

You can't even get back most of the year 2011. That's one thing even Almighty God cannot do. Don't foolishly claim that promise in Joel 2, which says, I will restore to you the years that are eaten away.

We can live in imaginary claiming verses that don't even mean that. It's impossible. Time moves on.

God can't give it back to you. He can give you the future, but not the past. It's gone.

If you have wasted your life, you're wasting your life. What could God give back to the thief on the cross, when he got converted just a few moments before he died? He has to go to heaven and say, thank you Lord for saving me. I did nothing for you.

I'll tell you honestly, I wouldn't like to go to heaven like that. I would not like to go to heaven, saved on my deathbed and standing before Jesus, discovering what a lot he did for me and discovering I did nothing in return for him. I tell you honestly, I thank God that he's given me a long life after I was converted.

I thank God that he gave me the sense when I was a young man to choose his plan for my life and not my own. I wish you young people will have that sense to believe that God's plan for your life is better than yours. And I say to you from my own experience of 52 years as a believer, choose God's way when you're young and say, Lord, I make a principle in my life to choose your will and not mine, to choose your plan and not mine.

And to see that every single thing that can happen in my life is ordained by you. If I choose your plan and not mine, that's why I can give thanks. And the thing that the Lord showed me at that time was that if I don't give thanks in some situation, I'm at that moment confessing, oh, in this area, the devil somehow got control.

God almighty lost control here of the universe, but this for a few seconds, the devil got control. No, he never gets control. It's impossible.

My prayer is our father who is in heaven, who rules in heaven. There may be a lot of things the devil does, but God makes it all work for good. What's the worst thing the devil ever did on this earth? Kill Jesus Christ.

Wasn't that the best thing that ever happened? See how God made the worst thing the devil did to become the best thing for the human race. That is an eternal message on the cross. Not just that Christ died for our sins, which is one thing true, but that Satan was defeated on the cross.

How? The worst thing the devil could do, God turned into the best thing for the human race, teaching me a lesson for my whole life that anything the devil does to you can never be as bad as that. Anything the devil does to you, God can turn it to for your good. I have believed that and experienced it for years.

That's why I give thanks. I can't give thanks if the devil's messing up my life, but I can give thanks that whatever the devil does, God turns for good. That's why I give thanks.

Advancement on earth is not the best thing. I remember once when I was in the Navy, I got transferred to a small little ship, which I didn't like to go to. Twice it happened, and both times it turned out to be the very best thing for me.

I just did not want to go to that ship. The first time when I was just taking my baptism, and I wanted to go to an exciting warship, and they put me on a survey ship, which goes to all these uninhabited shores to survey the oceans. Boring.

It's the most boring ship you can ever go to, and nobody in the Navy ever wanted to go there. And I went there. I was sitting alone most of the time.

I was the only believer on the ship because I was an officer. I had a cabin. That's where I studied the Bible for one year.

Oh boy, am I thankful for that today. It was the best thing that happened to me. I got to know the scriptures.

There was nothing entertaining outside. It was all desert and village, so I had to sit in my cabin almost for a year. I got to know the word.

Another time I went to one of these small ships. It's not exciting to go to a small ship. First of all, you get so seasick because the ship tosses about so much.

It's exciting to be on a warship. This was a little minesweeper. I was tossed about, tossed about, and there I was able to bring somebody to Christ, a non-Christian to Christ.

Boy, I'm going to see that guy in heaven. I would never have met him if I hadn't gone to that ship. I said, Lord, your ways are perfect.

I remember once I was waiting. I could tell you numerous stories like that. I was waiting for a boat to get to a ship, and I missed it.

I said, Lord, what shall I do now? So I had to wait for quite some time to get another boat, and while I was standing there, there was another man who came along also to take that boat, and I led him to the Lord. I said, boy, what all things God does. Learn to give thanks in everything.

Of course, if your aim in life is to make money and to become famous, then you can't give thanks in everything because God is not interested in that. If your interest is to become like Jesus and to lead others to become like Jesus, I can tell you in Jesus' name, you can give thanks for everything without a doubt. Accept God's authority over you, that you do what he says and say, Lord, I want to live prompted by you to move forward.

You know, the Roman centurion discovered that when he spoke to Jesus in Matthew chapter 8. Now, this is quite amazing because first of all, this guy is unconverted. I think the Romans worshiped all types of gods, not Jehovah. And this guy had never read the Bible, and here he was with this knowledge of the Bible at zero, actual zero.

That is the Old Testament those days, the Bible. But he was a God-fearing man. Can a man who's never read the Bible be a God-fearing man? Sure.

This man was. Another Roman centurion in Acts 10 was. And an angel appeared to him.

You think angels appear only to Christians? Cornelius was not a Christian. God has no respect of persons. I'll tell you that.

Absolutely no respect of persons. A man can belong to any religion if he seeks God. God will reveal Jesus Christ to him.

Sadhu Sundar Singh is one of the classic examples of that. A man who tore the Bible, sought God, and found Christ. So here's one of those people like that.

The Bible says, you know, we think that because we are Christians, God has got a special, we have special favorites of God. Well, not if you do your own will, not if you're living for money and yourself. You're certainly not God's favorite.

A lot of other people who are God-fearing and who are seeking God more than a lot of people who call themselves believers sitting in CFC. Sure. And God has got absolutely zero respect for persons.

Or which church you go to, or what doctrines you believe. He looks at the heart, not in the head. So this man, and you see, can you believe that a military man could be a God-fearing person? Here's one in Acts 10, Cornelius, another military man.

First non-Jew to hear the gospel and be converted was a military man. See how God chooses the most unlikely people. The first person to see the risen Jesus Christ was a woman.

Sorry, brothers. It was a woman. And it was a woman who was a prostitute.

Sorry, you holy sisters. God chose a converted prostitute to be the first one to see him. Mary Magdalene, a demon possessed, one who had seven demons cast out of her.

I tell you, God sees into people's hearts. And he has a lot of respect for people whom we may not have much respect for, because they don't have the knowledge of doctrine like we have. And God sees the heart, their humility, their brokenness.

Those are the things that God values. And he'll value us too, if we have those same values, not because we know the Bible. So this Roman centurion, you see his tremendous light, which so many Christians don't have, when he comes to Jesus, and he asked Jesus to please come and heal my servant lying paralyzed at home.

There are two areas where I see his tremendous humility. And that's the reason why he got this revelation from God. God gives his revelation to the humble.

His humility is seen in one this. It's very rare for a Roman military captain to care for a Jewish slave who's paralyzed. I mean, most people say, well, get rid of this fellow.

He's not even from our race and find some other servant who can work. We don't want a paralyzed servant at home. What can he do, just lying in bed the whole day? This man was not like that.

How do you treat your servants? That's a pretty good indication of whether you fear God. When you read something like this, does God speak to you and ask you, how do you treat your servant if she's paralyzed? Get rid of her. You see why God can choose idle worshipping Roman military men over sometimes CFC believers who don't treat their servants right.

Learn something from these examples. I do. Whenever I read the Bible, I put myself in the place of that person and say, would I do that if I had a paralyzed servant woman at home? What would I do? Walk many, many miles, long distance to go to Jesus or get some treatment.

I tell you, God cares for those who care, for those who are lower down than you in society. That's one part of his humility. The second part of his humility is when Jesus said, I'll come to your house and heal him.

And he said, oh no, Lord, I'm not worthy. Matthew 8, verse 8, to come into your, I'm not worthy for you to come in under my roof. You see his humility.

If you met Jesus and Jesus said, I want to come to your home, would you ever say, oh Lord, I'm not worthy that she'll come to my house? I would say, sure, come. Of course, I'm worthy to have you in my house. That's the difference.

God has no respect because you've got a Christian name. Once you said, Lord Jesus, come into my heart. He sees whether you live in perpetual humility, perpetual humility.

It's very easy to be humble the first day you come to Christ. Look back to the day, the first day you came to this church, you were a nobody. Wasn't it easy to be humble those days? Today, you're a senior brother, senior sister, and you may not be humble.

And that's why you don't get grace to move on. That's why you don't get revelation when you read scripture. I never want to be in that place.

I say, Lord, I always want to keep my face in the dust because I want to see you. I want to get grace from you every day. I want revelation, increasing revelation as I grow older year by year.

It doesn't matter if the physical body becomes weaker. It does become weaker, but the inner man must be getting revelation more and more. It must be like that with you, dear brothers and sisters.

He says, I'm not worthy for you to come under my roof, but just say the word from here, from 10 kilometers away, say the word. My servant 10 kilometers away will be healed. Can a man have such authority? Can Jesus have such authority that he speaks a word here and 10 kilometers away, a sickness goes away? He says the reason, I'll tell you why I believe this, Lord Jesus, Matthew 8, 9, I also am a man under authority.

You know, I've noticed through the years that it's pretty easy for a military man to recognize another military man. There's something about the bearing of a military man that another military man recognizes. Particularly his respect for authority.

He's a real military man. Their respect for authority. I have met air commodores and admirals who meet me and say, call me sir, because in the military academy and in the Navy, I happened to be senior to them, even though I left it 45 years ago.

That's something, I said, why in the world do we have to call me sir? I was only a lieutenant when I left the Navy. It's just their respect for authority. Here's a man, I remember when I went to the National Defense Academy to see the academy I grew up in, and the man was the commandant of the academy general.

I just went to visit my old academy and he called me sir. And I said, watch this. That's something about authority in military.

Respect for authority. I tell you, Christians have got a lot to learn from military people. Respect for authority, respect for someone older than you, senior to you.

One who's walked with the Lord more than you. I always have done that. I have tremendous respect for godly men who walk with God for many years because I know it's not been easy.

And this man recognized that, that Jesus was a military person, another type of military. He didn't know what it was, but there was something he sensed in Jesus. This man's not like other men.

He seems to be a man under authority. I don't know what authority it is, but he seems to be, there's something about his bearing and the way he lives that he doesn't seem to be a man just doing what he likes. He seems to be a man under authority.

Can people recognize that in us? He doesn't speak whatever he likes. He thinks before he speaks because he's listening to authority. That's what it means to be under God's authority.

I also am a man under authority and I also have soldiers under me. So when I say to the soldier, go, he goes to another, come, he comes. Because when my general tells me go, I go.

When he tells me come, I come. And on the parade ground, when I'm told to right turn, I turned right without even waiting five seconds. When they say turn about, I turn about without waiting one second.

That's authority. You know why they do so much of parades in the military? Right from the day you join, you do parades, parades, parades, parades, is to teach you one thing. When you are told to turn right, you don't ask why.

If you ever do that, they'll teach you such a lesson that for the next 50 years, you'll never ask why. Sure. I know I've seen that.

I never tried it, but I saw that with some other people who are a bit slow in turning around. They learned a lesson that day that never again in their life would they ever do that. Subjects to authority.

And I tell you, Christians need to learn that. I sometimes wish Christians, all Christians were sent into the military for a few years because they learned what it is to be under authority. Immediate obedience.

God says, go, go. God says, go and ask that person's forgiveness. And you dream and think about it.

You're not a man under authority. You hurt your wife. Go and ask her forgiveness.

Yeah, we'll pray about it. You can't pray about it on the military parade round. Do you see examples of how we think we are spiritual? Go and return that money that doesn't belong to you.

Yeah, we want to pray about it. This pray about it is one of the most deceptive religious phrases I've seen people use to basically say, I don't want to do it. And they say, I don't want to do it.

That sounds unspiritual. So they say, I'll pray about it. And of course, the answer will be no, don't do it.

Deception. Don't fool yourself. Be a man under authority and then you'll have authority.

The reason why this Roman captain had authority was because he listened to the general. Then he had such authority. And I tell you, we don't have such authority over evil and sin and the devil because we're not under authority like that.

I know how this verse challenged me. We're to walk as Jesus walked, the Bible says. That means we are to have authority over evil.

You have to authority over Satan. But if I tell Satan go, he goes, he doesn't think about it. You know why? When you tell Satan to get out of your house, he says, I'll think about it.

It's because when God tells you to do something, you say, I'll think about it. God tells you to do something. I'll pray about it.

And you tell Satan, get out of my house. He says, I'll pray about it. And he stays there.

If you're under authority, you'll have authority. If you're not under authority, you won't have authority. And face up to the fact, the reason why evil has such power over many of us is because we refuse to be under authority.

You want to have authority. This Roman military man who knew less than 1% of what we know of scripture, we talk about new covenant and all this high sounding stuff, but this guy knew what new covenant was. That is immediate obedience.

That is new covenant. And so he said, you just speak the word and I know it'll go. But what he meant was there's such authority when a man of God speaks a word.

You know, even when we share God's word, I don't mean just in a pulpit, but even in ordinary conversation, when we're sharing God's word with others, sitting around or speaking on a telephone or writing an email. If you want God to speak to you, God to give authority to your words, be under authority. When I was a very young Christian and I started preaching God's word when I was 23 years old or so, this is a word that spoke to my heart in 1 Samuel chapter 3, verse 19.

1 Samuel 3, 19, thus Samuel grew and the Lord was with him. And he did not allow any of his words, the literal word there, if you have a margin in your Bible says, fall to the ground. He did not allow any word of his to fall to the ground.

And God was with him and he did not allow any word he spoke to fall to the ground. When I read that, when I was 23 years old, I said, Lord, this is what I want. That when I speak, I want you to be with me that my word doesn't fall to the ground.

It goes straight like an arrow to the person's heart and conviction or challenges him or encourages him, whatever it is, but it must not fall to the ground. You know, a lot of messages I hear, 80% of it is just falling to the ground. It's boring, waste of time listening.

It shouldn't be like that. And the only reason is we're not under authority. This Roman centurion recognized it.

Lord, you're under authority. So if you speak a word, it won't just fall to the ground, it'll go 10 kilometers and hit somebody and accomplish a result. This is the way you and I are supposed to live, my brothers and sisters.

This is the way you and I are supposed to live. That our words have authority. And I believe even our children will learn to respect that word when we ourselves live under God's authority.

We want our children so much to live under our authority. The Lord says, are you under my authority? Your children must obey instantly, right? You shouldn't have to tell them twice. What about you listening to me? How many times do I have to tell you? You see how we demand on others what we ourselves don't do.

And we'll never have authority. So to be under God's authority, then we have authority over people. See John chapter 17, this is a word that the Lord really spoke to me about having authority over people.

What type of authority are we supposed to have over people? John 17, here's the authority that Jesus had over people. The Lord says in his prayer to the Father, Father, you gave me authority over all flesh to do

what? Not to rule over them, but to give eternal life to those whom you have given to me. See, I don't have a responsibility for all the believers in the world.

I don't even imagine that. Even Jesus said, those whom you have given to me. And that was a very small number.

You read further in John 17, you find he was talking about 11 people. You know, Jesus spoke to concentric circles of different sizes. First, there was the outermost concentric circle of huge crowds of thousands of people.

You know, once he fed 5,000 men alone, maybe 10,000 altogether, women and children. That was a huge circle of people. He spoke God's word too.

And he spoke with great compassion and love and authority. And then there was a smaller circle of 70 disciples. That is a much smaller circle, which obviously with whom he spent much more time.

And then inside that was a still smaller concentric circle of 11 people. Those are the ones he felt my father has given to me. And I'm going to spend most of my time with these folks.

Yeah, he blessed the multitude, healed the sick and delivered demons and all that. And he used 70 disciples to go and preach. But when it came to the 11, it was not just blessing them.

It was not just using them. It was leading them to eternal life. That's the greatest.

And I see myself also. I say God has given me also. And even when I, you're not all called to be preachers, but I'm called to preach in many, many different places and many churches.

And I always try to recognize my boundary. And I see myself in three different, I have three different boundaries, as it were, in some churches and to some people, I would rather say to some people, let's put it like that. To some people, I'm, I have the authority of a spiritual father and I can deal with them just like I dealt with my children at home, love them, encourage them, give my life for them, spank them, correct them, whatever it is, seeking their good.

That's a father. And then in the outer circle, I have, it's a circle of people who I have less authority over. There I'm like an elder brother, like my eldest son.

He couldn't spank and correct his younger brothers and he didn't attempt it either. But that was, but he, he was the older brother. And if ever Annie and I left home to visit somewhere, even if he was 10 years old, I'd say, okay, now you're the head of the house for the next couple of hours till we come back.

So, but it was not as a father, it was like an elder brother, limited. And so some places I go to and with some people, I say, I'm not a father to you folks. And I don't think you want me to be one.

I'll be like an elder brother, give you a little guidance once in a while. If you want me, if you ask me for advice, I give it to you. And then there's a wider circle.

Some churches I go to, I'm just a visiting speaker, you know, like a consultant pediatrician. You take your doctor, you take your child to the doctor. He gives you some advice and he doesn't keep watching over your child to see whether you bring him up properly or not.

And many churches I go to, it's like that. I remember once when I was in the United States, somebody asked me, he said, brother Zach, sometimes I, when I hear you on YouTube, I don't know where you're speaking. Here, there are different places.

They all come together on YouTube. And but I noticed that some places you hit really hard, especially in the conferences in Bangalore. And you come here to these churches here and you speak so gently and softly.

Why is it like that? I said, those are my children. These people are not. And I just recognized my boundary.

So they said, I was amazed to hear this. Brother Zach, we want to hear those hard hitting messages. So how to detect that on YouTube, please tell us the color of the curtain in CFC so that we can find out which of the messages you preach in CFC.

Those are the ones we want to hear. I was amazed at the passion these some of those folks have to hear a hard hitting message. So Jesus said, you've given me certain people and I want to give them eternal life.

Do you know what Jesus called Judas Iscariot, who was not in the circle of leaven when he came to betray him? Do you know the word he used in the Garden of Gethsemane? Friend. Friend. Have you come to betray the son of man? Do you know the word that Jesus used for Peter, his leading disciple when Peter said, don't go to the cross? Satan.

How do you call the leader Satan and the betrayer friend? You know, one of the Psalms, David says, let the righteous smite me. It'll be like anointing oil upon my head. And Jesus asked the disciples, do you want to go away? Simon Peter, who was called Satan said, Lord, to whom shall we go? These are the words of eternal life.

Lord, that rebuke you gave me, call me Satan. It saved my soul. Those are the words of eternal life.

Jesus also knew his boundary. He called the Pharisees vipers. I think that was bad.

He called Peter Satan. He called Judas friend. He knew that some people could stand it.

Some people couldn't stand it. So he wouldn't. He knew, what shall I say with Peter? I can, I know I need to deal with him hard because he's got to be a leader.

But Judas Iscariot, even at the last minute, I hope he will repent. That's why I called him friend. But the guy's heart was so hard.

He wouldn't repent. Instead of confessing to Jesus, he went and confessed to the priests, teaching us never confess your sin to a priest, confess it to Jesus. Okay.

Jesus was given authority to lead people to eternal life. You know, that's the only authority God has given us. When we are under God's authority, God gives us authority over people for what? Why is he giving you authority as a father and mother over children? Not to spank them and hit them and rebuke them and correct them 1000 times and encourage them just once.

That's not the way to lead them to eternal life. You have to ask yourself, everything that you do to your children is the ultimate goal to lead them to eternal life. Yes, we need to correct them.

We need to discipline them, but we also need to instruct them in the way of the Lord. If you don't instruct them in the way of the Lord, all your correction and discipline will not lead them to eternal life. You need to instruct them by your example and by your life and the values they see in your life.

That's a million times more important than just spanking them and disciplining them. Any idiot can spank his children, but only a godly man can be an example to his children and give them instruction by his life and by his words on the ways of God. The Bible says, fathers, bring up your children in the instruction and discipline of the Lord.

You know that verse? It says that in Ephesians in chapter 6. It's very important and the responsibility is given primarily to fathers. Bring them up in both discipline and instruction. Both are necessary.

Discipline alone won't do the job. So the purpose of all discipline and instruction is to lead them to eternal life. I see why has God given me authority as an elder in a church or to work with many elders.

It's nothing to boast about. It's to lead them to eternal life and if I'm not leading them to eternal life, I have failed. If I seek to say things just to please people, I have failed because my job is to lead them to eternal life.

Eternal life is the life of God. It's not, as you've often heard me say, it's not living forever because those who go to hell also live forever. They don't have eternal life.

Eternal life is not a life that has no ending but a life that had no beginning and no ending. Eternity means no beginning, no end. Only one person has eternal life and that's God.

But I can have that life if I open myself to God. I can have that life and my job is to lead other people to that life and eternal life is something I've got to lay hold of more and more and more and more. It says that in 1 Timothy and chapter 6. 1 Timothy 6, it says, Paul tells Timothy who has already been a believer 25 years and a wholehearted believer.

He says to him in 1 Timothy and chapter 6 verse 12, take hold of eternal life. Fight the good fight of faith in order to take hold of eternal life. It's not easy to keep a hold of eternal life.

You've got to fight everything in the world and the flesh and the devil is trying to get you to lose in your grip on eternal life. You've got to fight in faith in order to take hold of eternal life. It's not enough to say, Lord Jesus come into my heart 30 years ago.

You've got to fight the good fight of faith every day to take hold of eternal life and I need to lead people to take hold of eternal life. You've given me authority. What is the authority God has given us over others? Not to rule over them, not to domineer over them, not even over our children, not definitely not over a church.

I feel sorry for elders and I've seen some of them who think that because they're elders they can domineer over others. Thank God we don't have such people here. But there are churches where elders and pastors are just domineer over others and the way they collect money from people to live in grand style of themselves, that is a way of domineering.

It's evil. Can you imagine Jesus collecting money from poor people to live in grand style himself and to buy a grand chariot for him to go riding on horses when they themselves are walking? Can you believe that?

Can you imagine preachers collecting money from others to build grand homes and expensive cars and planes? That's not, that's the devil. That's not authority.

God has given, gave Jesus authority to give people eternal life not to collect money from them. That's why I'm so angry like Jesus was in the temple against these people who make money in the name of religion. Jesus was angry and at times we need to be angry too.

If you're not angry you're not like Christ when you, when it comes to such matters. The place where we should not be angry is where people spit on you or insult you. There you must love them.

But when the name of the Lord is dishonored and you're not angry you watch these television evangelists and you can sit coolly and watch them without getting angry. You're not like Christ. I'll tell you to your face you're not like Jesus.

You're enjoying them. You're enjoying these fellows however clever they may speak. People go to listen to them, big platforms and stadiums and you enjoy listening to them because you see the message is so good.

What about their spirit collecting money from poor people? You should be driving them out of the temple. But you're not angry because you're not like Jesus. You're angry when somebody spits on you.

Dear brothers and sisters we got it all wrong. We haven't studied the life of Jesus sufficiently. He had authority over people only to lead them to eternal life and if he was angry with people who are making money in the name of religion and chasing them out it was to lead them to eternal life.

He said this is not the way. This is not what you should do in the house of God. We are also can have, when you're under the authority of God you will be given authority to lead other people to eternal life.

And then everything we do we speak and with everyone he wants God's given us authority. Our ultimate aim is must ask ourselves am I doing this to lead them to eternal life? Am I correcting them, my children or people who I have authority over to lead them to eternal life? If not I need to work out my own salvation. Then thirdly I have authority over Satan.

Now the reason why I spent most of the time on being under God's authority because that's the secret of everything. The other things sort of come automatically. Authority over Satan like Jesus said I give you authority Luke 10 19 to tread on serpents and scorpions.

Tread on them. Do you have faith that the devil, you have authority over Satan that if he tries to interfere in your life or your home or your church you can speak the word and he will go? Jesus spoke the word and the devil never thought twice. I've seen a lot of pastors yelling and screaming at demon-possessed people praying for hours and hours and hours and pulling their hair and all kinds of stupid things.

I remember when somebody invited me here in Bangalore to pray for some woman who was demon-possessed and when I went there some other Pentecostal guy had got there ahead of me and pulling the woman's hair and yelling. So I told this brother I said I don't know who's got the demon here is it this woman or is it this other guy? You better get rid of him first and that you can do physically and then we can cast out the demon. One word the demon left the woman and she accepted Christ.

Jesus conducted himself with such dignity and as a servant of God there must be dignity. You don't have to yell at Satan. I remember here in a bible school here in Bangalore seminary years ago about 35 years ago I was asked to speak there once and at the end of my message as I said let's pray way at the back one fellow got up and started dancing.

I knew it was a demon and I thought now if I say something aloud all these fellows will get distracted in the message they just heard. So I turned away from the mic and I turned around and whispered sit down in Jesus name. He went and sat down.

He couldn't hear me the people on the platform couldn't hear me. That's the day I learned one thing that the devil's got good hearing. You don't have to yell you never have to yell.

Children who don't drink eat their food you sometimes have to yell they're sitting two feet away because even though they sit two feet away their mind they're miles away but the devil is everywhere he can hear you very well. Whisper. Authority.

Very important to have authority over Satan because we are under the authority of God. I know that was a demon because some six months later I got this letter from some other country saying brother Zach I'm the one who was in that bible seminary that day you asked me to sit down. How in the world did he hear that word? That's what convinced me when I got that letter he said you asked me to sit down.

He heard it. The demon heard it. Dear brothers and sisters every one of us is supposed to live on earth without any fear of Satan.

No witchcraft can touch a child of God who's under God's authority. Nobody can touch us. This is how we're supposed to live at least from now on.

What shall I say? Live under the authority of God first. Forget all these other things. Seek with all of your heart.

90% that is the thing that's why I spent 90% of this message speaking on that. Live under the authority of God saying Lord I never want to do my own will. I want to do your will in everything big or small.

The way I spend my time. The way I spend my money. The way I do everything.

I want to do your will. Help me and then I know when I have to deal with people help me to remember that as a man under authority my only calling is to lead these people to eternal life. I have no other authority even over my children.

Those children are individuals whom God created. I did not create them. No.

You fathers and mothers remember that God created them. They're a gift of God. So the only authority God's given you over them is to lead them to eternal life with correction, discipline, encouragement, teaching, everything.

Lead them to eternal life and if you fail there we have been total failures as parents. Any child of yours whom you have not even tried, sought, prayed to lead to eternal life. You have failed as a parent.

Repent now and seek God and you got to keep on praying for them. I mean I my wife and I pray for our children. We pray for them this morning.

We pray every day. We pray for our grandchildren now. We must pray every day for our children.

If you have done this because we can't do it. We say Lord we're helpless. Lead them to eternal life.

Lead them to godliness. Fill them with the Holy Spirit. Help them to live for you.

Your children fail because you don't pray for them. God's given you eternal life in order that you might lead others to eternal life and the people you contact in the church. Lead them to eternal life.

Help them to get rid of their gossiping by not listening to their gossip. Sometimes people would come and tell me in my house brothers and you know this this this this is about this person. Oh really? I said let me just hang on.

Let me just call him and I'll tell him that you told me. No no no don't tell him. Don't tell him.

I said I always will tell. Definitely you tell me something about somebody I'll go and tell that person. No gossipers down to my house after that.

You want to get rid of gossipers? Follow that technique. And authority over Satan. The world is ruled by the devil.

But we are the ones who got authority. Other people may have money. They may have political position.

They may be rich people. They don't have authority over Satan. The only people on earth who have authority over Satan are those who live under the authority of God.

And Satan is scared of them. Satan must be scared of you and me. Let's pray.

Will you pray one prayer that what God has spoken to you today will not be forgotten. That it will sink deep and produce fruit in your heart. Pray that prayer.

Lord don't let this word be taken away from me. I bow before you. Help us Lord to live as those who will go when you tell us to go.

Come when you tell us to come. Do this when you tell us to do this. And to concentrate more on that than on the authority we have over people or over the devil.

Lord help us we pray that we don't deceive ourselves in this one earthly life. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

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