

The Battlefield Of The Mind II

*"Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."
"Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you"*

Luke 10:17,19

Last week we ended by talking about the authority we have in Christ. The Authority over all the power of the enemy, that same power that has held many of us in various forms of bondage for far too long. Understanding our authority in Christ is to understand our position in Christ . I think that it is critical for us to understand our position in Christ first, before we can ever understand the authority that comes with our position in Christ. Once we understand our position in Christ, then we will have a greater understanding of our authority in Christ, and how to use that God given authority, and the purpose for which to use it.

Remember what we talked about last week regarding the authority that Jesus gave us. Here is a little background information for us to understand the proper context as it relates to our God given authority;

Luke 10:1-3 ...the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two ... into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. 2 Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 "Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.

This is the scenario that is presented before us today. This is our objective that is given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ. He's telling us that there are truly plenty of people that are ready to receive Him, but there are not a lot of His believers that are willing to go out, and proclaim the Gospel to them, in order that they might accept Jesus into their heart and receive the free gift of eternal salvation. He told the seventy to go out, just like He's telling us now to go out "and make disciples of men, and teach them to obey His commands".

Why is it so important for us to go out and proclaim the message of the gospel? Why shouldn't we wait for someone else does this work? Why must we be the ones to make known the gospel of Jesus Christ to our loved one and friends and neighbors? The answer is found in the following Scriptures;

Romans 10:13-15, 17 ...whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things.

17 So then faith *comes* by hearing, and ***hearing by the word of God.***

At the end of Jesus' directive to go out, He acknowledged to them that He was aware He's sending them on a mission that is dominated by the enemy, and that they would be easy prey just like a lamb is among wolves. It's the same for us today, our present world is dominated by the influence and power of the same enemy, and if we stand alone, we are no match for his attacks.

Jesus completely understood this fact. That's the reason why He gave them the authority to go out and do the things He ask them to do. Not in their own authority however, but in the authority given by Him;

Luke 10:19 "...I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over ***all the power*** of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

Keep in mind that Jesus was not referring to literal serpents and scorpions here, he is using them metaphorically to represent Satan and his demons. He's actually telling them I give you the same authority that I have, over ***all*** the power of Satan and ***all*** his host of demons.

Today, we walk in that same authority, and some would say even greater authority. Our greater authority lies in the fact that Jesus Christ dwells within the believer today. His life is hidden in every believers life. Remember, the church (the believers, not a building) is the BODY of Christ. As ambassadors of Christ, our proclamation of the gospel has authority associated with it as though God Himself is making His plea through us.

Luke 10:16 He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me

As a result of the authority Jesus gave them, they returned from their mission victorious and were joyful, as a matter of fact, they were astonished because they discovered that even the demons were subject to them (in Jesus), and they were exuberant by that fact.

Luke 10:17 ...the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us ***in Your name.***"

However, their joy and exuberance was misguided and they were quickly corrected by Jesus in the following verse;

Luke 10:20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

Jesus did not want them to focus on the enemy, and I don't want you to focus on the enemy as he would have us to do. We must have our attention and focus on Jesus Christ and the work He has ordained us to do and not on the enemy. This is what Jesus was telling those disciples then, and what He's telling us now.

We are to be Christ centered and not demon centered. We shouldn't be overly concerned with our authority over the enemy, but rather we should be concerned with, and concentrate on who we are in Christ Jesus. We have no authority over Satan and his demons apart from our identity and position in Jesus Christ.

John 15:4-5 ...As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches... for without Me you can do nothing.

We are nothing, and have no power, or authority, other than what comes from Christ, and given to us the believer. If we try to do anything in our own strength or by our own efforts, we will be just like the seven sons of Sceva, the Jewish chief priest.

Acts 19:13,15-16 13 ...some of the ...Jewish exorcists **took it upon themselves** to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; **but who are you?**" 16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, **and prevailed against them**, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded

This scenario is typical of what will happen every single time when we take matters into our own hands and fight the battle using our own strength and by our own efforts. The enemy will always prevail against us. We can't accomplish anything without Christ, because our authority and power **exist only IN CHRIST!!**

Lets for a moment, examine the difference between the authority we have in Christ and the power that is accompanied with that authority, and lets use the example of a traffic cop.

Authority is our right to rule based solely upon our legal position given to us by a higher authority. The traffic cop has the right to walk onto a busy intersection and control the flow of traffic in a manner that he deems appropriate only because he was given that authority by an entity that is recognized and respected by the public he serves. Each driver recognizes the authority bestowed upon him to perform his task, and obeys his direction accordingly. The traffic cop has no ability, or power whatsoever on his own to stop the oncoming cars. If he tried to stop traffic using only his ability and power, the results would be less than favorable for the traffic cop. He can only stop and direct the flow of traffic solely based on the authority given to him by the higher authority. He has authority standalone authority as an individual.

Power on the other hand, is the ability to rule. Lets reiterate what we said before, that same traffic cop may have the authority to stop and direct traffic however, he does not possess the physical power to do so. If the drivers decided they will not obey the traffic cops commands, he is powerless to stop them. All he can do is get out of the way and let the drivers do as they will.

However, if you drop a 100 ton boulder in the middle of the road, the power to stop the flow a traffic now exist. The boulder doesn't have the authority to stop traffic, but it has the power to do so. If the driver decides he wants to challenge the power of the 100 boulder to stop the car, then the results would be less then favorable with the outcome benefiting the boulder.

The believer on the other hand, not only possess the authority to do God's will, he also possess the power to do God's will. Keep in mind that this authority and power we've been talking about is only to be used to do the will of the Father. It's not to be used, nor can be used to satisfy our own purposes or desires, only to do the will of the Father, who has already prepared the work for us to do, and has given us the desire to do the things *that please Him*.

Ephesians 2:10 ...we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, ***which God prepared beforehand*** that we should walk in them.

Philippians 2:13 ...God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do ***what pleases him***. (NLT)

The power that we the believer are to function under, is none other than the mighty and awesome power of God Himself, which is given to us solely based upon our legal position in Christ.

Ephesians 6:10 ...be strong ***in the Lord and in the power of His might***.

Deuteronomy 20:4 ...***the LORD your God is the one*** who goes with you ***to fight for you*** against your enemies ***to give you victory***. (NIV)

Now, at this point, let's reason together. In light of all that we've talked about thus far, do you honestly believe that God will sent you out as ***sheep amongst wolves***, to do the work that ***He*** has prepared for you to do, and has ***given you the will to do so***, without giving you authority and power to accomplish the task.

The Lord absolutely knows that if we were to go out in our own authority and power, the results would be exactly the same as there were with the sons Sceva in Acts 19. The enemy would prevail against us every single time without exception! God understands that we are totally incapable to accomplish any task He assigns us on our own.

One example I like to use to illustrate this matter is the story of Joshua and Caleb told in the book of Numbers. From the time the Israelites were delivered from their bondage in Egypt, to the time they reached the promised land, they knew that God had promised to give them "a land that flowed with milk and honey". They left the land of Egypt and wandered through the wilderness for the express purpose of entering into the promised land. However, once they arrived on the fringe of the promise land, Moses sent 12 spies, which turned out to be a forty day mission, to explore the land, and come back to give a report. The story goes as follows;

Numbers 13:25-28,30-31 (NIV) At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land. 26 They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community...There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 They gave Moses this account: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. 28 But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. (Giants)

30 Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."

31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." 32 And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. 33 We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."

Numbers 14:8-11 If the LORD is pleased with us, **he will lead us** into that land,... **and will give it to us.** 9 Only do not rebel **against the LORD**. And **do not be afraid of the people** of the land, because we will swallow them up. **Their protection is gone**, ...the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them. 10 But the whole assembly talked about stoning them....

11 The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt (reject, despise)? **How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed** among them?"

Joshua and Caleb were the only two that believed God and His promise, out of the twelve that were sent to spy the land. They were the only two to believe what God had promised them, and were willing to go out and get it. They were the only two who understood the authority given to them to claim to the promise land, and the power of God that accompanied that authority to capture the land.

They were different from the rest. They possessed a different spirit from the others and had a different attitude than the others. I want you to discover the difference in you. I'm attempting to

get you to realize your true position and authority in Christ, so we can enter into any promise that God has pledged to us.

Numbers 14:23-24 they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. 24 But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.

The others were full of unbelief and fear, even though they know God had promised them the land, and even though God performed many marvelous miracles before them in the past.

The consequence for their rebellion and disobedience was serves and catastrophic! Their unbelief caused all of Israel not to believe, and infected them with fear. As a result, the Lord did not allow those unbelievers to enter into the promise land. He made them wander in the wilderness for forty years (one year for each day they of their mission) until every last one of them above the age of twenty dropped dead in the wilderness, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. (Numbers 14:29-34)

After getting a better understanding of our legal position in Christ and the authority that's associated our position in Christ, one might argue, why does the Satan's kingdom exercise so much power and influence over the lives of so many believers today. The answer is clear, it's because the enemy is a deceiver, and his objective is to deceive the believer into thinking that they are still under the same bondage they were in before they received Christ into their lives.

1st John 5:19 ...the world around us is under the control of the evil one.

Revelation 12:9 ...that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, *who deceives the whole world*; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Satan's purpose is to get you to believe that he has more authority and power than you do. If he can get you to believe that, then you will live your life accordingly. In some regards he's correct. He does have more power and authority in the spiritual realm than you do as a standalone individual. However, we are not alone, we are "*in Christ*", and we are "*strong in the Lord and in the power of His might*".

Neil T. Anderson wrote in his book *The Bondage Breaker*, "When we don't understand our spiritual heritage, we don't experience the freedom and fruitfulness which is built-in to our position in Christ. As long as we fail to perceive our position in Christ and our authority over the kingdom of darkness and authority to do His will, we fail to carry out our delegated responsibility".