

Mother of God Community
Sunday Night Praise & Worship
March 22, 2020
Step Into Your Authority as a Child of God
A Reflection on Our Authority in Christ
Don James

I believe the Lord wants to teach all of us about the authority we have in Christ as members of his Body. **We may understand this to varying degrees intellectually, but that is not enough.** God wants us to understand it *experientially*, and we do that by *exercising it*. I believe God wants this for all of us — to ***enter into His authority in a new way.***

What follows is a little of what the Lord is putting on my heart. This is just a starting point. I have a lot more to learn.

When Jesus was driven into the desert to be tempted, he was tempted in 3 ways. I won't go into each one, but each was an attempt to cause Jesus to act for *himself rather than to rely on God*. **And this is at the heart of authority, because it is an issue of *whose authority we are living under.***

In the second temptation, the devil shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and says to Jesus: *"I shall give to you all this power and their glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever I wish."* (Luke 4:6).

Jesus didn't correct the devil here. In fact, this is precisely why Jesus came into the world, to redeem what was handed over to the devil by our first parents, Adam and Eve. When God created Adam & Eve, **He gave them a purpose, a responsibility for creation and the authority to carry out that purpose.** In Genesis, we read:

²⁸God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." (Genesis 1:27-28).

"Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and care for it." (Genesis 2:15)

It is important for us to understand this – Adam and Eve were given responsibility that God expected them to act upon. We will come back to this later because responsibility is a large part of salvation and the reason why we are given authority in Christ. But when Adam & Eve chose to embrace the devil's lie rather than God's command, **they chose to live outside of God's authority**, and fell under the devil's domain.

So, going back to Jesus' temptation, Jesus shows us how to defeat the devil, and it isn't simply in quoting scripture, for the devil was quoting scripture as well. Rather, Jesus takes a position of humility and obedience to the Father. The verses Jesus quoted all had to do with **reliance on God, trusting God, and worshipping God.**

Jesus shows us that the way to defeat the devil is to live according to the Father's will. Not to let the "hunger of our flesh" control our will, but as St. Paul says, to

"...present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual act of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:1-2)

The reason we often fall or do not see the power of God's authority in our lives, is because, like Adam, we believe a lie and therefore fail to act according to God's purpose for us and therefore, we don't tap into the authority that comes with that purpose. **We can tend to live as if we have something to lose.** In other words, if we think there is still something in this world that can fulfill us, we are still clinging to a lie and cannot tap into God's authority.

Mother of God Community
Sunday Night Praise & Worship
March 22, 2020
Step Into Your Authority as a Child of God
A Reflection on Our Authority in Christ
Don James

Experiencing God's authority in our lives comes from embracing the Cross of Christ, from understanding that in baptism **we died to sin and rose with Christ**. A dead man cannot give in to temptation. St. Paul exercised great authority, because his attitude was:

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." (Galatians 2:20)

St. Paul was able to trust God, because he placed everything in God's hands. He weighed the scales, he saw the *eternal joy* set before him compared to the emptiness the world could offer him, and put his lot with the Lord.

I want to mention a couple scriptures to bring this home. In James chapter 4 we read:

You do not have, because you do not ask. And when you do ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may squander it on your pleasures. (James 4:2-3)

When we step out of God's authority to indulge our flesh, we become ineffective. But when we place ourselves under God's authority and live according to His intention, he will give us anything we ask for:

Anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing...You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it (John 14:12-14).

Conclusion

So I want to conclude and then end with prayer.

Our salvation involves an active participation in the life of Christ, wielding his authority to affect our own lives and the world around us. We are not a people ransomed by the blood of Christ to passively enjoy his blessing. No, like Adam & Eve, we have a responsibility, a purpose. **Our baptism has intrinsically changed us.** It made us children of God, filled with the Divine Life of God through the Holy Spirit. **It is the nature of God to bring about his intention for creation,** and therefore, it is also the nature of all who are filled by the Holy Spirit.

We are in a situation where we are a new creation, filled with the Holy Spirit, but we also have to deal with the life of the flesh, with its memories, appetites, and habits. Like Adam & Eve, we have choices throughout the day to decide *whose authority we will live under.*

We step into his authority by living according to what he has already revealed to us to the best of our ability. God will refine us as we act.

One question to ask ourselves is: **"whose authority am I living under right now?"** The Centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant understood authority because he, himself, operated under authority. That's why he believed that Jesus just only had to say the word, and his servant would be healed. (Luke 7:2-10)

The more we bring ourselves under Jesus' authority by obeying what he asks of us, the greater our ability to wield his authority in our lives and in the world around us.

Mother of God Community
Sunday Night Praise & Worship
March 22, 2020
Step Into Your Authority as a Child of God
A Reflection on Our Authority in Christ
Don James

We are called to action. God wants us engaged, whether in teaching, preaching, intercession, healing or any number of ways he may equip us to serve. Why? Because that is what a child of God does, God is not passive, but is actively engaged in his creation. And *it is in the doing that we grow in authority.*

Prayer

So let us turn to the Lord in faith and pray:

Heavenly Father, we thank and praise you for the wonderful purpose you have given us. In love, you call us to participate in your Divine Life, to receive ALL that you have for us, and to *act* according to your power at work in us, so that we would bear fruit and multiply.

Lord, MOVE US TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH YOU, more time gazing at your glory, more time considering the unfathomable gift that you offer us so that we would be moved to surrender all for you.

Lord, we repent for the times and the ways that we have held back. We repent for allowing busyness and the cares of this world to take our focus off of you. We repent for the times we have not trusted you.

Lord, we are not our own. You purchased us with your precious blood. We are yours. We are your temples. Lord, we pray, CLEAN YOUR TEMPLE! Clean us out Lord. We give you permission right now, Lord! Remove from our hearts the fears, appetites, and habits of the flesh. Break these from us Lord, and write your laws and your purposes upon our hearts.

Lord, train us. Teach us your ways. May we wake each day seeking your will and joyfully expecting to follow your Holy Spirit. Disciple us Lord, train us to be your presence in this world, to carry on your mission. Teach us to be like the Centurion, a person under your authority, looking to wield your authority over our own thoughts and desires, and to advance your kingdom.

... I know there are times when any one of us can feel weak, like our spiritual life has withered, like the dry bones in Ezekiel. But right now, I proclaim in the name of Jesus to each of you, "YOU ARE ALIVE!". In Jesus, YOU ARE ALIVE, and the enemy that once ruled over you has been defeated and cast down. You have been redeemed, your dignity restored! You are beloved of the Father! It is his delight to give you the Kingdom.

Do not be afraid. In Jesus name, I proclaim that chains of fear be broken. Rise up, you are not a fallen warrior. In you is the same power and authority that raised Jesus from the dead, seating him above all things. Hear his word to you, rise up. God has more for you.

Take the mantle the Lord is passing on to you. Take up the role God is giving you, and exercise it with confidence and authority. Bear fruit. You are a child of the most High, be encouraged and act.

Jesus, we surrender to your authority and pray that you help us to remain and act in your authority. We pray this in your most holy and powerful name.