

St Martins C3 – March 6th, 2022

Called to Be People of Authority

Sermon Notes:

Today, we are going to look at one of the tools God gives us to bring His Kingdom – the authority he has placed within us.

Read Ezekiel 37:1-10

God, chooses to use Ezekiel and have him speak the words of life over these bones. Ezekiel sees amazing things as a result. The bones rise up as a great army.

God always partners with people to bring life to His world. He longs to bring us into the story of what He is doing in the world and effect change.

Read Matthew 16:13-19; Matthew 18:15-20; Matthew 28:18-20; Philippians 2:6-11; 1 Corinthians 15:27; Ephesians 2:6

All authority has been given to Jesus, he has conquered death and he reigns forever. Jesus is the ruler of the universe. So who does he send to bring the Kingdom of God? Us. He commissions us and gives us His authority.

Many believe that their prayers, their prophesy, their acting for God is second best to someone more spiritual. But the picture that scripture portrays is that God gives all His followers power and authority to move and act on His behalf.

We move as though we are Jesus in the world.

This understanding changes the way we do everything. We are aware of the works of the enemy but we don't fear. We act to bring God's life into the pain around us. We pray differently. Let's look at three types of prayer.

Helium Balloon Prayers

This is sending prayers up like helium balloons, watching them go out of sight and not knowing if they ever make it to God. It is prayer without faith.

God is my Butler Prayers

This is praying to God like ordering a butler around. He must do what we want and what we ask. We believe that we can control heaven to make it happen. This is prayer without a relationship.

Doubles Scull Prayers

This is praying in the same way that doubles scull champions row. Every stroke they are reading what the other is doing and they are moving with their partner but also leading them. This is prayer with relationship and faith.

Wherever you feel Him leading stand in authority. Remember the same power that rose Jesus from the dead lives in us. When we pray, when we stand against the devil, when we act, we are doing it with the authority of God.

There are three stages to prayer. The first is where we talk at God, the second is where we communicate with God, listening as well. The final stage is where we move from communication with God to communion with God becoming interconnected with Him.

Questions for Connect Groups:

Sermon Reflection:

What stood out to you from this week's message?

Why did God use Ezekiel to raise the dry bones, when He could have just done it all himself?

Read the New Testament Passages from this week? What do they mean for the Christian?

Life Application:

In what ways do you feel unqualified to bring God's Kingdom to the world?

How can you overcome these feelings of inadequacy?

Which area would you like to increase in, faith in God or understanding of His will? How can you begin to grow in this understanding?

What would it look like to stand in the faith of those who have the authority of the sons and daughters of God?

What is God asking you to use your authority for at the moment?

What kind of a pray-er are you?

How can we move our prayer from talking and listening to being in communion

Monday Devotion: Authority Over Spiritual Forces

Read Mark 6:7-13; 1 John 4:4; Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 6:10-19

This week we talked about the authority we have in Christ. However, we might be asking what this authority looks like in practice. This week we will have a look at some areas we can use our spiritual authority.

The first area is over spiritual powers aligned against God. As we understand what Christ achieved on the cross, we know we never need to fear the presence or influence of demons.

The devil is defeated. He has been overcome. We stand against him as those who are fully armed with God's power. Upon conquering an enemy, the Romans would hold a parade. They would take the conquered king, strip him naked, and drag him through the crowd behind the conquering king or commander for all their subjects to see. There was no need to fear him anymore. Any rumour about him ever challenging Rome again would be scoffed at because the citizens had seen him in the parade.

The same thing happened to the devil. Jesus not only beat the devil, but He had a triumphant procession to display the devil to the universe as a conquered foe. *Satan should never terrify us again.* We can stand in that authority and see the devil flee from us. We don't need to go looking for demons but when we encounter evil spiritual forces we can take authority over them in Jesus' name.

Tuesday Devotion: Authority in Teaching

Read Matthew 7:28-29; Titus 2:15; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; 2 Corinthians 10:8

The second area of authority is in teaching those around us the word of God. When Jesus taught the sermon on the mount the crowds were amazed at his teaching. Not just the words and illustrations that he used but the way he taught carried with it a special power.

There are some who special gifting to teach, however, all believers can speak with the power of God's Spirit and have authority when using the word of God.

There is a word of caution here. We must be careful that we are correctly using God's word. We cannot make the Bible mean whatever we want it to mean, but we need to understand its message in context and see its application in our world now. To misuse the word of God as a weapon against others is serious and is sinful.

We must also make sure we are using this authority to encourage and build people up, not to judge them. God gave Paul authority, but that authority was not to tear people down it was to build them up (2 Corinthians 10:8).

Let's make an extra effort to encourage others in our church and when we perceive things in their life that might be out of line with the Bible, let it draw us first into prayer and then into a relationship with them. If they then seek advice we can speak God's word to them, teaching them more of the ways of God and wisely bringing correction.

Wednesday Devotion: Authority to Lead People to Jesus

Read: Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 9:1-6; Matthew 9:6-8

The Great Commission is Jesus telling his followers their great mission. The mission of bringing his life to the world through making disciples. It includes the task of letting them know that Jesus is now King of the Universe and showing them how to follow Him.

This is a massive job and may feel way beyond us. The good news is we don't have to do it on our own. It is a co-mission, one we are doing with Jesus, as He will never leave us.

Jesus went boldly to people healed them and forgave them their sins. We don't have the authority to forgive sins, but we can lead others to the one who can. We can also pray for Him to do miraculous things in their life, like healing, an increase of emotional health and restoration of relationships.

An example of what this looks like is found in the early chapters of Luke when Jesus sent his disciples into the surrounding areas. He gave them authority to drive out demons, cure diseases and proclaim the Kingdom of God. He gave them the ability to remove anything that might be a barrier to His Kingdom.

Think about those in your world who need to know the love of God. What are the things that might be barriers to them knowing Him? Today, pray in the authority God gives you to see those things moved.

Thursday Devotion: Authority Now and Forever

Read Luke 10:17-20; Revelation 2:26-27

The authority God has given us now is a taste of the authority He will give His followers in the world beyond this one. In the book of Revelation Jesus is talking to the church in Thyatira. He tells them that if they overcome in this world then in the world to come they will have authority over nations in the same way that Jesus has authority.

The disciples got a taste of this when they went to speak of Jesus to the people in the surrounding regions. When they returned Jesus declared that their ability to share was a victory over Satan himself.

He then tells them they have the authority to trample on snakes and scorpions. Some people have taken Jesus' words too literally and created cults out of them. In these cults, the sign that you are a true follower of Jesus is that you can walk on snakes and scorpions and not be harmed by them. What lunacy.

Instead, Jesus here is talking about the authority we have to live for God in a way that is far beyond this world. When we face the difficulties of life we don't need to worry about them overwhelming us, we can live in the faith of God that overcomes all things and gives us the strength to do the same.

If we will rule over all things in the future, we can begin to see some measure of it now.

Friday Devotion: Authority Comes From Submission

Read James 4:7-10; Romans 5:8; Romans 8:14-16

Our authority is not a right that comes to us because of our greatness. The story of scripture reminds us that we are totally incapable of earning anything by our own goodness. We do not have authority just because we are humans or because we are members of an earthly organisation.

Rather our authority comes from our inclusion in the family of heaven. This in turn is a miraculous gift of grace achieved by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We now count ourselves as children of God, co-heirs with Christ.

This means that we have been granted authority over many things. We have all the rights that a child of a King would have.

However, there are still times we need to draw close to our Heavenly Father to strengthen our authority. As we draw closer to Him He draws close to us. This in turn gives us all the strength we need to resist the devil and see him flee from us.

Today, take a few minutes to draw close to God again. As you do, may you find that your prayers and His will become interconnected. May you experience new depths of understanding of His purpose and may you pray, speak and act with the authority of God Himself.