

Walking in Authority – Part 1

“If my heart and treasure are in heaven, the fact will be manifest in my daily life” (Alexander Smellie)

We have for a while been focusing on our walk in Christ. This walk is a walk of co-operation with Christ who is our life and our all. It's a walk where we, with the help of the Holy Spirit, submit the members of our soul and body to Christ within, in order that He may think, speak and act through us. Now one thing is for certain, the enemy does not want us to do this. And so we, daily, face a battle. As Paul states in Eph 6:12 ... *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”* It is a struggle, and when we take our eyes off Christ the flesh prevails and we succumb to the wiles of the enemy. So, now our focus will turn to gaining some understanding on how and why we can walk in Christ, in victory, all the time. For this reason, therefore, it is important that we understand the matter of authority and the power that backs up the authority.

To do this, we need to understand the difference, application, purpose, place and significance of the many words found in the scriptures relating to authority, dominion, and rule, in coordination with strength, might, and power.

The Greek words found in the scriptures and their meanings are as follows:

ἐξουσία – Exousia – Authority, right to act	} These words all relate to
ἀρχή – Arché – Rule, origin, beginning	} authority, the right to act,
ἀρχων – Archōn – Ruler, chief	} the ones in charge
κυριότης – Kuriotēs – Dominion, lordship (from kurios – lord, master)	}
δύναμις – Dunamis – Power, strength or ability	} These words all relate to
κράτος – Kratos – Might, force, strength	} power, strength, might,
ἰσχύς – Ischus – Strength, might	} force
ὑποτάσσω – Hypotassō – To subject, Place under (lower rank)	}

To confuse the issue, some translations mix up these words and don't always render the correct meaning. Power and authority are often mixed up, and as they mean very different things it is important to get the true meanings in the right places. But even more basic is the need to understand the true meaning of authority. This is important to avoid confusion or misunderstanding, and so that we can grow and walk in confidence in Christ.

To start off with, a couple of simple illustrations will help here:

1. The **authorised** traffic controller, working with a team doing road repairs, or helping kids cross the busy street going to or from school, holds up a sign instructing the traffic to stop whenever he or she deems necessary. Now, in terms of **power** or **strength** or **might**, this person and

their sign are no match for a huge big oncoming truck, or a car for that matter, as the truck or car could easily carry on driving and crush the **authorised** person to death. The truck is way more **powerful** than the sign holder. However, behind the traffic controller and their sign stands the **authority** of the State, the Police, and the Laws of the Land, so that if the truck doesn't stop when instructed to do so by the **authorised** person the truck driver will face the full **power** or **might** of the Police and Magistrates courts to sentence and imprison him for failing to stop.

2. A totally **unauthorised** random person, let's say an anti-global warming activist, who does not want aeroplanes flying because they add to the pollution of the air, runs onto a busy airport landing strip with a sign saying you can't land here, expecting the huge big jet liner to abort landing. Well, good luck to that **unauthorised** person, because, unless they jump really fast, they will be obliterated by the **powerful** jet's undercarriage as it carries out its **authorised** landing.

From these simple illustrations, it is clear that **authority** (or rule or dominion) is something completely different from **power**, or **might** or **strength**, but it is related to, and foundational to, these latter words. True authority is backed by the power or might of the authorizer. So, our attention must first of all go to understanding authority, its source, and how it is designed to operate in the believers walk.

There are three things relating to authority that are important to us:

- 1 – Our response to God's direct authority;
- 2 – our response to people (both believers and unbelievers) to whom God has delegated authority;
- 3 – our position, responsibility and backing in exercising authority over the enemy, principalities, dominions, and rulers of darkness.

1. Our Response to God's Direct Authority

We start with the first of these; our response to God's authority.

It is very clear that the source of all authority is vested in God (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit). God is Author of all, and all authority is vested in Him.

Gen1:1 ... *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."*

Gen 2:1 ... *"Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts."*

John 1:1-3 ... *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."*

Eph 4:6 ... *"one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all."*

Phil 2:9-11 ... *"For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

The Lord laid aside all His divine attributes, lived as a man in total obedience to the Father's will, and as a result was exalted by God to the highest position of honour and authority.

Matt 28:18 ... *"And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority (exousia) has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."*

Rom 13:1 ... *"Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities (exousiais). For there is no authority (exousia) except from God, and those which exist are established by God.*

Col 1:16-17 ... *"For in Him (Christ) all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions (kuriotēs) or rulers (archōn) or authorities (exousia)—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him."*

So, it is really clear that God is the Author, the One who is the source of all authority.

God's authority represents God Himself. He alone is God. He is the Author (that's where the word authority comes from). He is the Originator. He is the beginning and the end. The Alpha and Omega. Whereas His Power, strength, or might, stands for His acts, what He can do. He who is Author, the One in authority over all, and the source of all authority, is also the Omnipotent One, who is all powerful to carry out or enforce all He authorises. God uses His utmost power to maintain His authority.

For our walk to be victorious it is first and foremost absolutely essential that we submit to God's authority, which means we are to honour and obey God.

God's greatest demand on us, more than bearing the cross, making offerings, or self-denial, or anything else, is our obedience. It's for us to submit to Him, His authority, His will, in absolute trust and obedience. Just look at our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane where He expresses His trust and obedience to God's authority. He says, *"If it be possible I'd like some option other than going to the Cross, but it's not about what I want, it's about Your will being done, and I submit to Your will."* The Lord's death is the highest expression of obedience to authority. The will of God is the absolute thing, because His will represents His authority, and His authority represents who He is.

Heb 5:8-9 ... *"Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation."*

Christ did not bring obedience to earth when He put on flesh. He, as a man, learned and applied obedience through the things He suffered in His journey to carry out the Father's will. He came to fulfil the will of the Father, and even though this brought much opposition, suffering and pain to Him, He obeyed every step of the way. Christ was in complete submission to the authority of the Father. We see how often Christ pulled apart to spend time talking to His Father to seek His will and guidance, so He could obey and carry out the Father's will.

Christ is the principle of obedience. The one who accepts Christ accepts the principle of obedience. Therefore, a person in whom Christ lives must be one who is also filled with and operates in obedience. May God be merciful to those who claim they understand authority when obedience is not fully operational in their lives. No sin is more serious than rebellion, and nothing is more important than obedience.

I look back at the lives of some of the characters in the Bible, like Joseph, who suffered at the hands of his brothers, false accusations, and the years of imprisonment he faced, or Job, who had no idea that Satan had approached God and been given go ahead to bring much suffering and loss to him to prove his love and faithfulness toward God, and yet neither Joseph or Job ever did anything but trust God and submit to Him through all the times of suffering. There was never a moment of disobedience or turning from God, only trust and obedience to His greater purposes.

God's word states His will. So, in the face of adversity, especially when we don't understand why things are happening the way they are, what does He require of us?

Phil 4:6-7 ... *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

Prov 3:5-6 ... *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."*

And so the question comes: Do we always obey everything God has asked of us, or declared in His word, without a question, or hesitation or doubt? What do we do when we face trials, temptations, suffering, rejection, pain, or bad news? Very often we don't understand why certain uncomfortable and undesirable things are happening to us. But does that really matter? For God is Sovereign, He is in control overall, nothing can happen to us apart from His knowing and permission. He knows what He is doing. He has a purpose and destiny, a will, for each and every one of us. Our life is like a tapestry with our Lord doing the weaving. The back of the tapestry is a series of knots and crisscrossed threads of varying colours that may look a mess, but the right side is something that is getting more and more beautiful with every added thread. For Him to achieve His will all he asks is for us to trust and obey. For us to willingly and unquestioningly submit to His authority.

To disobey God is to reject God's authority, which is to reject God. And that is definitely not something we should ever even think of doing!

1 Pet 1:22 ... *"Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart."*

"Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls." Purified souls ... that means renewed mind, will and emotions. Renewed, purified, through being aligned with God's will. This comes through obedience to the truth – submission and obedience to God's authority. Putting on the mind of Christ is simply putting on His mind of submission and obedience to the Father's will.

So, the two most important things for us are trusting in God without question, and obeying Him. For the believer, the only victorious walk is a walk of submission and obedience. God's authority is stamped on every word He has declared, and what He has declared in His word He expects us to accept

in full trust, and to obey everything He has told us to do. And of importance is, that He has empowered us in Christ to be able to obey. Heb 5:9 declares, *“And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.”* 1 Cor 1:24 declares, *“Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God”* and He is the life and power within us! So, we have no excuse.

Only when we work under, or submit in obedience to authority, can we work in accordance with the will of God. Matt 7:21-23 is a perfect example of this principle. It’s not just doing good works we are called to; it’s submitting to Christ as His arms, legs, and voice as He operates through us according to His specific leading, which comes from a living relationship with Him. Listen to Jesus’ words:

John 5:19 ... *“Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.”*

John 5:30 ... *“I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”*

Any other attitude than this is lawlessness or rebellion.

Faith is the principle by which we receive the life of Christ, and obedience is the principle by which His life in us is lived out.

Trust and obedience, in submission to authority, is the trigger that releases Christ’s power on our behalf. The power or strength to carry us through whatever we face or have been asked to do.

Recently, while talking to the Father, He brought to my attention that His yearning desire is for our unquestioning trust and immediate and obedience. He reminded me that just like we, physically, consist of a head and body, so is Christ our head and we are His body. He went on to say that our body members automatically and unquestioningly respond to the thoughts, impulses and directions coming from our brain. For example, you are thirsty so you get up, go and get something to drink. Your feet or legs don’t moan and say, oh we don’t want to get up and walk to the kitchen, we don’t feel like it. Or, they don’t say, we’re not sure about this thirst thing, or, ok we’ll go but not right now, we’ll go later on. Your hands and fingers don’t complain and refuse to hold the cup or turn on the tap. Your whole body simply gets up, goes and gets a drink, and your thirst is quenched allowing you to return to whatever you were previously doing. It all happens smoothly and automatically. And the Lord said to me, I just long for My body to have this unquestioning and immediate response to Me and My will. No delay, no questioning, no complaining, no doubting – just trust and obedience – submission to my authority – smoothly and automatically, immediately.

What a powerful analogy and statement from His heart. He certainly got my attention and got me thinking! How are we doing? We really need to give some attention to this matter.

When we, the body of Christ, the church, operate in instant and total obedience to God and in submission to one another in the fulfilling of His will, we will see the world change and accept Christ. I think that’s what Paul meant when he spoke of a message being ... *“a demonstration of the Spirit and of power.”* We, the church, must accept and honour God’s authority, for He has no other way for the world to be evangelised. Obedience releases the power of Christ to bring change.

Now, having considered all we have said so far, we also need to exercise caution here, because it is possible to agree and stand with Christ in doctrine while at the same time stand with Satan in attitude or principle. Self-will and pride will bring our downfall. Even in sacrifice there can be the element of self-will. Just read 1 Sam 15:10-23 and see how king Saul, against God's specific command, spared Agag, king of the Amalekites, along with the best of the livestock, and used the excuse that he had saved these to offer them sacrificially to God as a thank offering to God for His help in defeating the enemy. Saul may have offered up sheep and oxen, yet God never accepts them as a sacrifice unto Himself because there was a Satanic principle involved. Partial obedience, or delayed obedience, or obeying with a bad attitude is actually disobedience. Disobedience is nothing less than rejecting God. And rejecting God brings with it very serious consequences.

Obedience alone honours God's authority, for it alone accepts God's will as central and absolute. Will represents authority. So, to be subject to, and to honour God's authority, it is imperative that we know and understand God's will. His will is revealed in His Word and through prayer. A victorious walk therefore necessitates time in prayer and the Word. Communion with the Author.

Col 1:9-12 ... *"For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask **that you may be filled with the knowledge** (ἐπίγνωσιν epignōsin – intimate revelation knowledge) **of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding**, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge (ἐπιγνώσει epignōsei – intimate revelation knowledge) of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light."*

So, spend time in prayer and in the word, commune with the Author; He will reveal His will, and then it up to you to obey – immediately, automatically and smoothly – step by step, knowing His power will be released on your behalf to see you through. This is the only way to guarantee a victorious walk in Christ.

Amen.

We end here for now, and will continue with points 2 and 3 next time.