

Exercising Authority

The door to exercising authority pivots upon two phrases Paul prayed for the Ephesians: Eph. 1:20 **"...and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places."** and Eph. 2:6 **"...hath raised us up together."**

Meditate on these two prayers. Learn to pray them over yourself. Feed on their truth until they become a part of your inner consciousness. Then they will dominate your life. But don't try to accept them mentally; you've got to get the revelation of them in your spirit.

Notice that not only is Christ seated at the right hand of the Father, above all the powers in Satan's realm, but we're there, too, because God **"hath raised us up together."** Not only have we been made to sit but notice where we are sitting: **"Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion...."** (Eph. 1:21).

In the mind of God, we were raised when Christ was raised. When Christ sat down, we sat down, too. That's where we are now, positionally speaking: We're seated at the right hand of the Father with Christ. (The act of Christ's being seated implies that, for the time being, at least, certain aspects of His work are suspended.)

All the authority that was given to Christ belongs to us through Him, and we may exercise it. We help Him by carrying out His work upon the earth. And one aspect of His work that the Word of God tells us to do is to conquer the devil! In fact, Christ can't do His work on the earth without us!

Someone will argue, "Well, He can get along without me, but I need Him."

No, He can't get along without you any more than you can get along without Him. You see, the truth that Paul is bringing out here in Ephesians is that Christ is the Head and we are the Body.

What if your body said, "I can get along without the head. I don't need my head."

No, your body can't get along without your head. And what if your head said, "Well, I can get along without my body. I don't need it; I can get along without hands and feet." No, you can't.

Likewise, Christ can't get along without us, because the work of Christ and God is carried out through the Body of Christ. His work never will be done apart from us—and we never can get along without Him.

Ephesians 6:12 says: *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers...."* If you take this verse out of its setting and go on talking about this awful fight that we are in against the devil and describing how powerful the devil is, you've missed the whole point Paul was making— **because that's not what he's saying in Ephesians.**

Remember, when Paul wrote this letter to the Church at Ephesus, he didn't divide it into chapters and verses. Scholars did that at a much later date to help us in making reference. You can do great harm sometimes by picking one verse out of a chapter, taking it out of its setting, and making it say something it doesn't say.

The Holy Spirit, through Paul, already has said in the **second chapter** that we are seated above these powers that we have to deal with. Not only is Christ seated at the right hand of the Father, far above all these powers, but we're there, too, because God has made us sit together with Christ.

Therefore, in our battle against the enemy and his forces, we need to keep in mind that we're above them and we have authority over them. The Word tells us that Jesus has conquered them. Our job is to enforce His victory. His victory belongs to us, but we are to carry it out.

The Demon Jesus Refused To Deal With

Years ago, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to a preacher in a vision and talked to him for about an hour and a half about the devil, demons, and demon possession. At the end of that vision, an evil spirit that looked like a little monkey or elf ran between Jesus and the preacher and spread something like a smoke screen or dark cloud.

Then this demon began jumping up and down, crying in a shrill voice, "Rackety-yak, rackety-yak, rackety-yak." The preacher couldn't see Jesus or understand what He was saying.

(Through this entire experience, Jesus was teaching the preacher something. And if you'll be attentive, you'll find the answer here to many things that have troubled you.)

The preacher couldn't understand why Jesus allowed the demon to make such a racket. He wondered why Jesus didn't rebuke the demon so he could hear what He was saying. The preacher waited a few moments, but Jesus didn't take any action against the demon. Jesus was still talking, but the preacher couldn't understand a word He was saying—and he needed to, because He was giving instructions concerning the devil, demons, and how to exercise authority.

The preacher thought to himself, “Doesn't the Lord know I'm not hearing what He wanted me to? I need to hear that. I'm missing it!”

He almost panicked. He became so desperate he cried out, "In the Name of Jesus, you foul spirit, I command you to stop!"

The minute he said that the little demon hit the floor like a sack of salt, and the black cloud disappeared. The demon lay there trembling, whimpering, and whining like a whipped pup. He wouldn't look at the preacher.

"Not only shut up but get out of here in Jesus' Name!" the preacher commanded. He ran off.

The Lord knew exactly what was in the preacher's mind. He was thinking, Why didn't He do something about that? Why did He permit it? Jesus looked at the preacher and said, "If you hadn't done something about that, I couldn't have."

That came as a real shock to the preacher—it astounded him. He replied, "Lord, I know I didn't hear You right! You said You wouldn't, didn't You?"

He replied, "No, if you hadn't done something about that, I couldn't have."

He went through this four times with Him. He was emphatic about it, saying, "No, I didn't say I would not; and the preacher said I could not."

The preacher then said, "Now, dear Lord, I just can't accept that. I never heard or preached anything like that in my life!"

He told the Lord he didn't care how many times he saw Him in visions—He would have to prove this to him by at least three Scriptures out of the New Testament (because we're not living under the Old Covenant, we're living under the New). Jesus smiled sweetly and said He would give him four.

The preacher said, "I've read through the New Testament 150 times, and many portions of it more than that. If that is in there, I don't know it!"

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THE BELIEVER'S AUTHORITY PART 3

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Dealing With the Devil

Jesus replied, "Son, there is a lot in there you don't know."

He continued, "Not one single time in the New Testament is the Church ever told to pray that God the Father or Jesus would do anything against the devil. In fact, to do so is to waste your time. **The believer is told to do something about the devil.** The reason is because you have the authority to do it. The Church is not to pray to God the Father about the devil; the Church is to exercise the authority that belongs to it."

"The New Testament tells believers themselves to do something about the devil. The least member of the Body of Christ has just as much power over the devil as anyone else, and unless believers do something about the devil, nothing will be done in a lot of areas."

We have been taught that certain people have power. No, Jesus said the least member of the Body of Christ has just as much power over the devil as anyone else; and when we start believing this, that's when we're going to get the job done.

Jesus continued speaking to the preacher, "I've done all I'm going to do about the devil until the angel comes down from heaven, takes the chain and binds him, and puts him into the bottomless pit [Rev. 20:1-3]."

That came as a real shock to the preacher.

"Now," He said, "I'll give you the four references that prove that. First of all, when I arose from the dead, I said, **'All power [authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth'** (Matt. 28:18). The word 'power' means 'authority.' But I immediately delegated my authority on earth to the Church, and I can work only through the Church, for I am the Head of the Church."

(Your head cannot exercise any authority anywhere except through your body.)

The second reference Jesus gave to the preacher was Mark 16:15-18:

MARK 16:15-18

"15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

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**17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;
18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."**

He said, "The very first sign mentioned as following any believer—not any pastor or any evangelist—is that they shall cast out devils. That means that in my Name they shall exercise authority over the devil, because I have delegated my authority over the devil to the Church."

Remember, **Colossians 1:13** that says, **"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son...."** (One translation says: **"the Father hath delivered us from the power of darkness."**) Again, that's the Greek word 'power' here for 'authority.'

The verse should read, **"The Father hath delivered us from the authority of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."** God already has delivered us from the authority of darkness! Therefore, we've got a right to speak to darkness—that is, Satan and his kingdom—and tell them what to do!

Exercising Authority Over Others

Believers have authority over the devil. They can break the power of the devil if he raises his head anywhere in their own life or the lives of their immediate family or loved ones. They have authority there. They'll be free from the enemy because they have the right to exercise their authority over him.

That doesn't mean, however, that they'll go down the street casting the devil out of everyone they meet. It primarily means they will exercise authority over the devil in their own lives.

You must realize that you have authority over your own household that you don't have in my household. Spiritual authority is much like natural authority. For example, you don't have authority over my money. You can't tell me what to do with my money unless I give you permission to. You don't have authority over my children.

You can make the devil desist in some of his maneuvers in somebody else's life, but you can't always cast him out, because you don't have authority in that "household." That's one place we've missed it. Only through intercession can you exercise spiritual authority in somebody else's family.

The next reference Jesus gave the preacher was James 4:7: **"...Resist the devil, and he will flee from you"** (the understood subject of this sentence is "you").

The believer has authority over the devil, or the Bible wouldn't tell him to do something about the devil. This Scripture doesn't say that the devil will flee from Jesus; it says he'll flee from you!

Similarly, you don't pray that Jesus will lay hands on the sick; you do it. Notice, too, that the hands are not in the Head; the hands are in the Body: **"They ... shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."** When you lay hands on the sick, you are exercising authority over the devil.

That authority is yours whether you feel like you have it or not. **Authority has nothing to do with feelings.** But you must exercise it.

After that vision, and after Jesus gave the preacher that verse from James, the preacher's spirit told him the word "flee" was significant. He looked it up in the dictionary and found one of the meanings was "to run from as if in terror." The devil will run from you in terror! Then he knew why the demon in his vision had begun to whimper and cry—he was terrified.

Since that vision with the Lord, the preacher has seen other demons quake and quiver in fear as he exercised his God-given authority over them. They were not afraid of him, but of Jesus, whom he represented.

In the vision Jesus gave the preacher another Scripture that tells us to do something about the devil. This third reference was from First Peter. Peter wrote, **"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"** (1 Peter 5:8). Your adversary means your opponent.

This is as far as a lot of people read. They say, "Oh, the devil's after me!" They ask for prayer, so the devil won't get them—but the devil's already got them if they talk that way. It's too late to pray then.

What are **we** going to do about him: Roll over and play dead? Hide our head in the sand and hope he'll disappear? No, thank God, notice what it says as we go on reading. The next verse reads, **"Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions [tests and trials] are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."** The American Standard Version says, "your faith" instead of "the faith." I like that better.

Jesus told the preacher in this vision, "Peter did not write this letter and tell Christians, 'Now, word has come to me that God's using our beloved Brother Paul in casting out devils,

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and he's sending handkerchiefs or cloths, and the diseases are departing from people, and evil spirits are going out of them, so I would suggest that you write to Paul and get a handkerchief.' "

No, instead of that, he told them to do something about the devil. Why? Because they have authority over him. The Spirit of God through the Apostle Peter wouldn't tell you to do something you couldn't do. The reason you can do it is because every believer has the same authority Paul had in Jesus Christ. Peter didn't tell us that only Paul could cast out devils or that Paul would resist the devil for us. (Why get Paul to do it when you can do it for yourself?)

Standing for Baby Christians

People are always asking why they don't get healed. Some think there is something wrong with the preacher who prayed for them!

One way to explain it is that when they were first saved, they were baby Christians, and God permitted others to pray for them and carry them on their faith. But after a while, God expects that baby to grow, walk, and start doing things for himself. God puts the baby down and tells him to walk, but many won't. Too many people still want to stay as babies and have someone else pray for them all the time.

We want to help those who can't help themselves, but we need to teach people so they can grow and use their own authority, because the time will come when they have to use their own authority if they want their prayers answered.

Once a travelling preacher and his wife stayed in a certain couple's home while attending a convention. The woman had been in his church before she had married. They asked the preacher and his wife to pray for their baby boy, who was just a few months old, and had a rupture. The doctors wanted to operate on him.

The preacher and his wife cursed the rupture and commanded it to wither and die. In a matter of a few days, it had disappeared completely, and the baby never had to have the operation.

The baby's mother said, "Brother, I don't mean to be critical, but in our church, it seems that we younger people are the only ones who have any faith for healing. I didn't know who to ask to pray for the baby before you came, because no one ever gets healed here."

We ought to grow stronger in faith the older we get, but too often we don't. In her church, as in so many, most of the people were saved when they were younger, and God permitted

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others to pray for them then. But because of a lack of right teaching, they remained in that babyhood stage of Christian development. They said, "We used to get healed when we were first Christians, but now we don't."

It would make just as much sense for you never to have any clothes of your own—always depending on wearing somebody else's clothes—as it would for you never to exercise your own faith or do your own praying, always depending on somebody else's prayers.

What happens to people who never attempt to exercise any faith of their own, but always rely on other people's faith? We just read that ***".. your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.."*** But the believer can do something about him.

Jesus, James, and Peter tell us to do something about the devil. Paul says **in Ephesians 4:27**, ***"Neither give place to the devil."*** This was the fourth Scripture Jesus gave the preacher. He explained, "This means you are not to give the devil any place in you. He cannot take any place unless you give him permission to do so. And you would have to have authority over him or this wouldn't be true."

Authority on the Earth

Jesus added, "Here are your four witnesses. I am the first, James is the second, Peter is the third, and Paul is the fourth. This establishes the fact that the believer has authority on earth, for I have delegated my authority over the devil to you on the earth. If you don't do anything about it, nothing will be done. And that is why many times nothing is done."

Now you can understand why things have happened as they have. We've permitted them to happen! Not knowing our authority - not knowing what we could do - we have done nothing, and we actually have permitted the devil to keep on doing whatever he wanted to do.

We need to realize this. Let's wake up. We may have to change our way of praying and get after the devil. I have. It won't hurt you to change; it's good for you. We have authority to do this. We're sitting at the right hand of the Father, far above principalities and powers. If we're far above them, then we have authority over them.

Ephesians 1:22,23 goes on to say, ***"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church [The feet are members of the body. Feet aren't members of the head.], Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."***

As one preacher pointed out, how wonderful to know that the least members of the Body of Christ—those who are the very soles of the feet, the little toenail, or the little toe— are far above the mighty forces we have been considering.

Remember, Jesus said in **Luke 10:19** to the other seventy disciples that He sent out, ***"Behold, I give unto you power [authority] to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you."*** How much authority does the Church have over the devil? ***Any less than this?*** No, thank God, no.

Yet if you'd listen to the average Christian talk or hear some preachers preach, you'd get the impression that the devil is bigger than everybody and that he's running everything. Yes, he is the god of this world, so he's running the world system. But we're ***in*** this world, not ***of*** this world, the Bible says this, so he's not running us. The devil has been walking all over us far too long.

These things are not joking matters. We're foolish to make light jokes about these things. A preacher once said to another preacher at a convention, "Well, Brother, I've got the devil on the run. The trouble is, I'm running and he's after me!"

Making a statement like that just shows ignorance. In the first place, you haven't any business running from the devil. The Bible says he'll run from you. You need to put him on the run. Unfortunately, I think that is the picture of preachers and churches too much of the time; in fact, most of the time. We see it everywhere.

Reigning as Kings

Let's look again at **Romans 5:17**, ***"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)"*** The Amplified Bible says we shall ***"reign as kings in life through the One, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One."***

God's plan for us is that we rule and reign in life as kings: to rule and reign over circumstances, poverty, disease, and everything else that would hinder us. We reign because we have authority. We reign by Jesus Christ. In the next life? No, in this life.

If we're going to sing something or say something, let's be sure it's in line with the Word of God. Some people sing, "Here I wander, like a beggar, through the heat and the cold," or "Precious Jesus, don't forget me"—all kinds of unbelief.

We're not wandering like beggars, because we're not beggars. We're children of God, heirs of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ (**Rom. 8:17**). We're the Body of Christ.

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We're seated with Christ at the right hand of Majesty on High, far above all principalities and power and might and dominion, glory to God! That doesn't sound like a beggar or "Precious Jesus don't forget me," or "If I can just make it in," or "Standing somewhere in the shadows you'll find Jesus," or "Lord, build me a cabin in the corner of Glory land."

I'd rather hear a donkey bray than listen to such songs, but we've sung them so long we believe they're true. People shed a few tears about "wandering like a beggar" and think they're getting blessed!

Too often we Christians act like young birds, having our eyes shut and our mouths wide open. Anybody can come along and feed us anything, and we're ready to accept it. Well, I'm not going to keep my mouth open and my eyes shut; I'm going to keep my eyes open and my mouth shut!

Humility vs. Poverty

For example, many Christians equate humility with poverty. One preacher told a pastor once how humble another preacher was because he drove a very old car. The pastor replied, "That's not being humble—that's being ignorant!" Driving an old car was that preacher's idea of humility.

Another fellow remarked, "You know, Jesus and the disciples never drove a Cadillac!" There weren't any Cadillacs then. But Jesus did ride a donkey. It was the "Cadillac" of that day - the best means of transportation they had.

Believers have allowed the devil to cheat them out of every blessing they could enjoy. God didn't intend us to be poverty stricken. He said we are to reign in life as kings. Who would ever imagine a king being poverty-stricken? The idea of poverty just doesn't go along with kings. We are not speaking about excess, but having more than enough to meet all your needs and also help others

Exercising Authority in Your Family

God didn't intend for the devil to dominate our families. When our children were small and the devil would try to put sickness on them, I would get mad at the devil and tell him to take his hands off my children. I would take authority over him and cast him out, and he had to flee through the name of Jesus Christ. I put him on the run, and he ran. You can put him on the run, too.

Years ago, a preacher was preaching in the North, and he was awakened in the middle of the night. Somehow, he knew in his spirit that somebody was in physical danger, and he began to pray in tongues.

He asked the Lord what was wrong, and He showed him it had to do with his older brother. The preacher knew his brother's life was in danger. He continued praying quietly in tongues for about an hour and a half. His praying didn't disturb his wife, who was asleep in bed beside him. Finally, he had a note of victory, and he began to sing very quietly in other tongues. Then he went back to sleep.

Two days later his sister called him from Texas. She was crying and almost in hysterics. "Our brother has been in an accident, and he's broken his back," she cried. "He's in terrible shape. He's in Kansas. The doctors don't know whether he'll live or not." "

Wait a minute," the preacher said. "Quiet down. He's not as bad as they think. If he was, God's already touched him, because I prayed about that two nights ago, and I've already got the answer."

"Have you?"

"Yes, I have. Don't bother a bit about it. He's all right."

Two days later she called again. She had checked on their brother's condition and had found that their brother had walked out of the hospital with his back in a cast. He hadn't died, like the doctors had predicted, and he wasn't paralyzed. He came to and was very despondent and depressed, because his wife had left him and had taken the children while he was gone.

The preacher had come back home and was preaching in his home church that Sunday morning. He tried to get his brother to go with him, but he wouldn't. He was a baby Christian, just barely saved.

Right in the middle of the preacher's sermon, the preacher suddenly had a vision. He had his eyes wide open, but out in front of him he saw his brother in the city park. The preacher heard him say to himself, Well, I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to kill her and then I'll kill myself.

The preacher stopped dead still and said, "Wait a minute. I've got a little matter I've got to take care of here. Then I'll get back to my sermon."

He spoke to that devil that was tormenting his brother: "Devil, you stop that right now! I adjure you in the Name of Jesus Christ to leave that man" (the congregation didn't know who he was talking about, but the devil did). That's all he said. Then he went back to his sermon.

When the preacher and his wife got home, his brother was at their house, and he was obviously in good spirits. He said he had walked to the park and had decided to take matters into his own hands. The preacher told him, "Well, I knew that," and he told him what he had seen.

He said, "Something came over me suddenly, and it was like something lifted up from me. It was as if a cloud lifted from me, and I came back to the house whistling and singing."

The preacher's brother didn't know how to touch the Lord for himself because he was just a baby Christian. Sometimes those of us who are older in the Lord have to help baby Christians and thank God we can. The time will come in their lives, however, when they will have to know how to do some things for themselves. We won't be able to act for them then.

Learn To Be Exalted

We Christians must learn that we are seated with Christ. We must learn to be lifted to the place where God wants us! The Church fails too often in this ministry of authority. Instead, She is bowed down in defeat and is overcome with fear.

Ephesians 1:22 says, *"And hath put all things under his [Jesus'] feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church."* Jesus is Head over sickness, disease, and anything else that's evil, as He proved when He was here on earth. By reversing the words, we'll bring out the deepest meaning more clearly: *"...head to the church over all things."* Jesus is Head over all things for the Church's sake.

We need to meditate upon these divine truths so that our spirits may fully understand them. Once we do, we'll reap rich rewards. When we have this reverent attitude, the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit, can lift us into a place where we can see the true meaning of God's revelation. In Ephesians, Paul prayed that the Church at Ephesus also might have this spirit of wisdom and revelation.

God made Christ to be the Head over all things to the Church. It is for our sake that He's the Head, so that we through Him might exercise that authority over all things. When we understand what belongs to us, we will enjoy the victory Christ has for us. The devil will fight to keep us from getting there, but through stubborn faith in Christ, the victory can be ours.

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