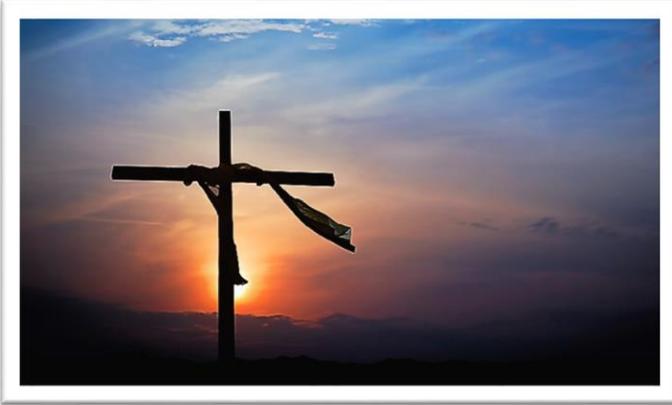


## SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY AND SPIRITUAL CONFLICT



I am FAR from an expert in this subject. At the same time, I have learned some things in 30+ years as a pastor I hope will be helpful.

My favorite illustration of spiritual authority is the classroom. In addition to being a pastor, I am also a high school math teacher. When I was an inexperienced teacher, the students sensed my lack of confidence in my authority, and took advantage of that.

Now, as a veteran teacher, all I have to do is walk into the classroom and quietly stand there. The confidence I have in my authority is obvious to the students and they quickly settle down.

What made the difference? Technically speaking, I had the same authority then as a new teacher – but I didn't have the FAITH to stand in that authority.

In my opinion, the issue in spiritual conflict is that of taking up AUTHORITY, rather than power. The power resides in the Holy Spirit who HAS BEEN POURED OUT. In other words, the power is present. We need FAITH to stand in the authority.

The believer must be CRYSTAL CLEAR about who has authority in this universe and be willing to put that to the test. That person is Jesus Christ. All other beings, powers, and influences, whether human, angelic, or demonic, are “under his feet” (see Ephesians 1:1 – 2:10).

The devil and his demons have been defeated by Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 2:14-15). All such beings and influences are under the feet of Jesus. Since believers are NOW “seated with Christ heavenly realms,” those evil beings and powers are under our feet as well.

However, I personally make a distinction between the authority of Jesus himself and his authority delegated to ME as a believer. Whereas Jesus has plenipotentiary authority in this universe (estimated to be 93 billion light years in diameter and expanding), I DO NOT.

Yes, I am (along with every believer) invested with Christ's power and authority, but I exercise his authority strictly in the realms I HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED. So for me, that means myself, my family, my congregation, my classroom, my neighborhood, and to a lesser extent my regional community, and my nation.

Those are the arenas in which I have FAITH to operate in the authority of Jesus Christ. For example, I have no faith at all in taking authority OVER Haiti. Nor will I even attempt to do so. (I will of course pray

for Haiti -- I just don't try to take personal authority over that nation. That is the responsibility of Haitian believers.)

Recently a friend at work asked me to pray for the health of his young daughter. I specifically made the point of asking him, "Are you giving me authority to pray for her?" My thinking was that unless he, as the father, granted me that authority, my prayer would have limited effect. He readily agreed and I declared her healed in the name of Jesus.

She is now improving.

In terms of my own family and congregation, I absolutely will lay myself out in **STRONG** authority and **DEMAND** that any and every evil spirit or influence be bound, removed, and forbidden to interfere in any way – in the name of Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, in the name of Jesus Christ, I vigorously declare **BLESSINGS** over those in my realms of authority. Specifically, I pray and declare that God's **NAME** be hallowed, that his **KINGDOM** come right here and right now, and that God's **WILL**, as it is done in heaven, be done **HERE** on earth.

I also want to make the observation that what Jesus did instantly and with a word has happened through me in **FAR** more modest ways. Perhaps it is limited to my level of faith. While I have seen instant healings through prayer, **MOST** healings have happened incrementally. This also applies to my experience in driving out demons. The first time I did so, it took almost an hour of praying and insisting that the thing leave. Jesus himself cast them out with a single word.

But I keep pressing forward in the level of faith I have at this time.

So what does it mean to operate **IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST**? To operate in "the name of Jesus Christ" means you have the **RIGHT** to use his name and authority. In other words, you belong to Jesus Christ and as his follower **YOU ARE WILLING TO ACT ON HIS BEHALF**.

On a side note, Dr. Ramsay MacMullen, Emeritus Professor of history at Yale University, in his book **THE CHRISTIANIZING OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE**, sought to resolve the question, "How did the Christian movement grown from 120 people to 3 million people in just three centuries – all of which time it was illegal?"

His conclusion is stunning. He found that the primary reason was that **ORDINARY** Christian believers, in the name of their risen God, were able to heal the sick and drive out demons in large numbers. The pagans of the Roman Empire flocked to this God who had such power on earth.

**WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO TAKE UP THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS AND ACT ON HIS BEHALF?**

It certainly does not look timid. It is a courageous, bold confidence, in which you put your faith to the test. In other words, if Jesus himself does not come through for you, you will at the very least look foolish, or worse, put yourself at risk of harm.

There is not a single example in the New Testament of a disciple of Jesus ASKING God for a healing or a deliverance. Not one. Instead, what you see are disciples, standing in the AUTHORITY of Jesus Christ and COMMANDING the healing or deliverance to take place.

It takes some nerve to pray like that. The devil will immediately whisper to you, “Who do you think you are?” It helps at that time to boldly say out loud, “I belong to Jesus Christ. He is my Lord and Savior and I am here IN HIS NAME!”

I cannot fully express how THRILLING it is to put yourself at some amount of risk and then SEE Jesus Christ acting with you. There is just nothing like it.

It is the believer’s GREAT PRIVILEGE to live, walk, and STAND in the spiritual authority of Jesus Christ. I am very much still in the process of learning how to do this – but I do know it is possible and I want to live that way more and more.

May it be so with you too.

If you are not yet a believer and would like to receive Jesus Christ, this seven-minute video will lead you to do just that.

<https://www.facebook.com/PastorScottHilborn/videos/1539516759424669/>