

Lost & Found Center Teaching Series



COMPONENTS OF SUPREMACY PT.2 AUTHORITY AND POWER

Introduction

From our previous study we were looking at the following verse:

(Jesus is) far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

Ephesians 1:21 NIV

The word of God here describes the supremacy of Jesus and describes the four components of supremacy as Rule, Authority, Power and Dominion. Here's a little recap.

Rule – height of authority – rule has a ceiling above which it can be overruled

Dominion – boundary of authority – rule has a boundary, outside that boundary you are no longer under authority

Authority – is all about rights, the right to control, the right to rule

Power – the force behind authority, behind every authority is some type of power

Notice that all the terms reference authority except authority. This verse is really about authority. First is that Jesus' authority is supreme and second that everything hinges on authority. In this study we'll explore the difference between authority and power in the kingdom of God and in the kingdom of the enemy because these differences are dramatic.

We'll start by looking at two persons. One could argue that both were seeking greater authority from God. The two persons are Jesus and Satan. How they go about gaining or attempting to gain greater authority is the whole point of this study.

Power and Authority in the Kingdom of the Enemy

Let's look at a couple verses in the Bible that tells about how the enemy of God attempted to gain greater authority in the kingdom. Look at these verses with power and authority on our mind.

**How you have fallen from heaven,
O morning star, son of the dawn!
You have been cast down to the earth,
you who once laid low the nations!**

**You said in your heart,
"I will ascend to heaven;
I will raise my throne
above the stars of God;**

**I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly,
on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.**

**I will ascend above the tops of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High."**

**But you are brought down to the grave,
to the depths of the pit. Isaiah 14: 12-15 NIV**

The enemy was trying to raise his throne above God's throne. He was not only looking for greater authority but also trying to eclipse God's authority. Conventional thinking about the enemy's problem is all about pride. We're just slicing this a different way. Regardless of his motivation, he was trying to take God's authority.

**And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon,
and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they
lost their place in heaven. Revelation 12:8**

This verse adds some clarity. There was a war in heaven. It is hard to imagine a war in the land of peace in a place that's perfect. It's hard to grasp a civil war in God's house. But what do you think the enemy was fighting for? Was it the right to rule? Was it authority? Look at the verse again. The enemy and the angels that followed him lost this war, but what did they actually lose? The Bible says "**they lost their place in heaven.**" They lost their position. They lost their right. They lost their authority in heaven.

He wasn't successful but this reflects his nature. The kingdom follows the leader. The kingdom of God follows the character and attributes of God while the kingdom of the enemy follows the character and attributes of the enemy. The enemy was trying to get greater authority from God by what means? We see from the above verse that it was by force. The enemy tried to use power to attain authority and he has not changed.

In the kingdom of the enemy, power is used to acquire authority.

Authority acquired by force is illegitimate. This is the enemy's way. Does this make sense? The kingdom of the enemy is now this world. All over this world since the beginning of time, since Adam and Eve fell, power has been used to acquire authority. The kingdom of the enemy has an unquenchable thirst for authority.

Strong people overpower weak people. People win arguments by attacking others. People get others to compromise by overpowering them, being aggressive, being assertive, by being dominant. Dominant people even rise to leadership in the church of Christ. Governments influence people by fear. Strong groups overpower weak groups. Strong nations overpower weak nations. Some may justify this by calling it the "survival of the

fittest” for the strong to prey upon the weak, but this is how the kingdom of the enemy operates.

When we operate this way, whom do we align with? When our church operates this way, whom do they align with? When our government operates this way, whom do they align with?

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 1 Peter 5:8 NIV

The above verse tells us that the enemy is looking for someone to overpower and to impose his will upon. In the kingdom of the enemy, power is used to take authority. This is how the enemy works and it is rampant in our society. What should we do? First is be aware of the ways of the enemy.

Be aware when you are inside his domain, which is using power to impose your will. Also be aware when someone is imposing their will upon you. In either case the kingdom of God is different. God’s ways are different.

Power and Authority in the Kingdom of God

So the kingdom of God must be different. We reviewed this verse in part 1, but let’s review it again. This is the other tract to greater authority. This verse is talking about Jesus.

**And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,**
Philipians 2:8-9 NIV

Jesus has acquired “all” authority from his obedience. Through his obedience to God, he allowed himself to be publicly shamed, tortured and eventually killed. He humbled himself and God exalted him. God gave him authority. There was no need for war to attain it. There was no need for force or power. This was and is a totally different approach.

For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. Matthew 23:12 NIV

This is foreign to us because it is not common sense. Common sense is something that everyone would agree upon. Dominating to rise to the top -that is our common sense. Humbling oneself and being lifted up that is just not how the world thinks. But these are Jesus' words. This is how his kingdom operates.

Jesus stated this again in no uncertain terms when discussing a request from two of his disciples. James and John two of Jesus' lead disciples made a request through their mother that they have exalted positions in heaven, one sitting to the right of Jesus and the other to the left. This speaks to the highest level of authority possible. Here was Jesus' response to all his disciples:

"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Matthew 20:25-28 NIV

Jesus said that the world may operate on leaders who are dominant and dominating but this is not how the kingdom of God works. That is not how authority in the kingdom is attained. That is not how God works. Jesus' life shows us how this works.

So how are you going to relate to God? Are you looking to take from God what's yours? Are you looking to be dominant in the kingdom of heaven? Or are you looking to follow in the steps of Jesus.

Power Follows Authority

Ephesians 1:21 from above states that Jesus was given all power. The power of God came with the authority of God. The two go hand in hand. How can there be true authority without power.

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. 1 Corinthians 4:20

As a result of the miracles Jesus had been performing, the rulers of Israel asked the right question. Jesus had entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him.

"By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?" Matthew 21:23 NIV

This should make sense. Anytime there is a display of power we want to know by whose authority was that power released. Whenever there is a terrorist attack we want to know

who is responsible. Whenever there is a military skirmish we want to know: by what authority things were done, and who gave that authority. Power follows authority.

Therefore we can say that authority in the kingdom comes from God through obedience and that power in the kingdom follows authority.

That's our next important point. Please notice the difference.

In the kingdom of God, authority is earned or given and power comes with authority.

Better to be Overpowered

We can then draw the conclusion that it is better to be overpowered than to give up authority. What a strange statement, but please follow me. Remember the verse:

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 1 Peter 5:8-9 NIV

The enemy prowls like a roaring lion and a roaring lion is powerful. The enemy plays power games. But what is he after again? He's after authority. The enemy wants to scare you with power to get authority in your life, to render you ineffective against him and in your service to our God.

What do we do? We follow the word of God. We make it a game of power. We stand firm in the faith and let him overpower us if he can. Our job is not to compromise in authority. Our job is not to give in to him at all. The Bible says "**Resist him, standing firm in the faith.**" Hold onto your faith. Do not fear or doubt. Yes we need help from the Holy Spirit here. But understand that he uses fear and doubt to gain authority into your life.

In the last study, when talking about power I said that the key thing to remember about power was to make sure it is not about your power or your ability. Remember how Paul learned it through his trials.

Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 2 Corinthians 1:9 NIV

The only way to resist the enemy is to stand firm in the faith and trust God. We rely on the power of God. We know that the Lord has already defeated him on the cross. The

enemy knows this as well. He knows that if we trust in God, he can't overcome the power of God. So he tries to use power to scare us and break our trust.

The Lesson from Shadrach, Meshach and Abendego

The story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abendego explains this nicely. This story can be found in Daniel 3. In brief, the king of Babylon had erected a statue of himself, then issued a decree requiring people to worship the statue. Some troublemakers in the king's court were out to get the Jews and reported to the king that a group of young men Shadrach, Meshach and Abendego would not worship the statue.

As a result the king summoned the young men and said:

"Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?" Daniel 3:14-15 NIV

What is happening here? The king is trying to use threats or power to impose his will and authority on the young men. Out of fear they could have compromised and given up their authority or right to serve God.

The young men responded:

"O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. 1But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." Daniel 3:16-18 NIV

Shadrach, Meshach and Abendego made this into a game of power and not authority. They told the king **"we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter."** We are not going to deny where we stand. We are not going to give up our authority or our trust in God. It will now only be about power: your power versus God's power – if he chooses to use it. Our authority is not on the table. We will never give up authority.

Awesome. That is a picture of what the Lord wants from us. Don't panic. That's where he wants us to go. Again these studies are never about condemnation or even doing anything. These studies are to help tune our thinking and to help tune our prayers. If this is where the Lord wants us to go, let's ask the Holy Spirit to help us get there.

Conclusion

So remember. Remember the ways of God and the ways of the enemy - that they are different when dealing with power and authority. Remember the enemy uses power to get authority. He uses threats, fear, and intimidation to impose his authority on you. When he does this, you need to make it a contest of power. Don't submit to him. Don't be unsettled by threats. Keep your authority. Be like Shadrach, Meshach and Abendego. Determine that you will not submit and that it's going to be his power versus God's power. God desires us to take a stand.

The enemy's goal is to dominate. These are the ways of the world. If we operate this way, we operate inside the enemy's domain. We need to be aware of this so we don't align ourselves with the wrong kingdom.

Lastly, remember Jesus has all authority. Remember that he attained it through his obedience and his humbling himself before God. God exalted him. God gave him authority. That's how it works in the kingdom. Those are God's ways. And with his authority came power. The Lord is looking to raise up a people who walk in authority and power in these last days. Why shouldn't we be that people. This is where the Lord wants take us. Let's ask the Holy Spirit to help us get there. Amen.

There is one more part to the Components of Supremacy. In our last and final study of this series we'll focus on us our authority and what that means.

Notes

For Questions or Comments please respond to lostandfoundcenter@yahoo.com and visit www.lostandfoundcenter.org for additional information.

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