

Union United Methodist Church

Sermon Outline: **Victorious Living in Christ 3: Exercising Faith & Spiritual Authority**

October 9th, 2022. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **Romans 5:12-17; Matthew 8:5-13**

1. Exercising Faith & Authority - A great example (Matthew 8:5-13)

Mathew 8:5-13 is a fascinating story that has many lessons for us.

The man who came to Jesus for help was a centurion. A centurion was a Roman military officer with command over a *centuria* (Latin for "century"), usually a company of about 80 men.

Some of the lessons we can glean from it include:

- **Jesus was always ready to put the divine life in him to work**

"Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress."

7 And he said to him, **"I will come and cure him."** Matt 8:6-7 NRSV

- **Authority is exercised with words**

8 The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but **only speak the word, and my servant will be healed.**

- **Authority in different realms have the same attributes.**

9 For **I also am a man under authority**, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it."

To the centurion, authority is authority, whether military or spiritual.

One with authority can issue a command and it will be obeyed.

He saw that Jesus was operating as an authority figure - in command of sicknesses and the problems around him.

- **Exercising authority is exercising faith**

Whether military or spiritual or in any other sphere, exercising authority is exercising faith.

13 And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you according to your faith." And the servant was healed in that hour.

- **Authority is exercised only within one's sphere of influence**

9 For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it."

- **Faith can be little or great. It follows that faith can grow**

The centurion exhibited great faith.

10 When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith

- **God is impressed with faith**

10 When Jesus heard him, he was amazed ...

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him"

Hebrews 11:6 NRSV

2. Over What Are We to Exercise Spiritual Authority?

There are many areas in this life over which we are to exercise our God-given authority and faith. We see Jesus do this in New Testament and the early disciples did too. These areas **include but are not limited to:**

- Spiritual forces of evil
- Sickness
- Sin
- Fear
- Certain circumstances and situations in this life

In today's sermon we'll cover the first two; and continue with the others next week.

○ Spiritual Forces of Evil

In biblical language, I am referring to the devil and his demons. In our modern scientific and information age, the notion that there are evil spirits at work causing problems for us can seem strange and old-fashioned. But the New Testament is clear that we are engaged in an ongoing spiritual battle with evil spirits.

These are practical needs we see in our society today that have spiritual causes. Only the anointing of Christ (the Spirit of the Lord) can destroy these.

- E.g., Material and spiritual poverty
- People held captive and oppressed in many ways
- **“For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”** Ephesians 6:12 NRSV
- **“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”** 1 Peter 5:8 NIV
- **“the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ”**
2 Corinthians 4:4 NRSV

“The god of this world” refers to Satan. The appeal of the things and ways of this world can also become a god to us.

○ Sickness

Jesus modelled this for us:

- 38 Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon’s mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. 39 So **he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her.** She got up at once and began to wait on them.
Luke 4:38-39 NIV

- Matthew 8:13 And to the centurion Jesus said, **“Go; let it be done for you according to your faith.”** And the servant was healed in that hour.

3. How Do We Exercise Authority?

- **By and In Faith**

We see this in the example of the centurion

- **Spiritual forces of evil**

- **Let the Divine (Eternal) life in Us In Christ Dominate**

- **“You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.”** 1 John 4:4 NIV

- **“If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ”** Romans 5:17 NRSV

“Death ruled like a king because Adam had sinned. But that cannot compare with what Jesus Christ has done. God has treated us with undeserved grace, and he has accepted us because of Jesus. And so we will live and rule like kings.”
Romans 5:17 CEV

- **Resist the devil!**

“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7 NRSV

8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. **9** Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings" **1** Peter 5:8-9 NIV

○ **Use The Right Weapons**

- "For **though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4** The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. **5** We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 NIV

- **10** Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.
11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.
- **13** Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.
14 Stand firm then, with **the belt of truth buckled** around your waist, with **the breastplate of righteousness** in place, **15** and with **your feet fitted with** the readiness that comes from **the gospel of peace**.
16 In addition to all this, take up **the shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.
17 Take the **helmet of salvation** and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.
18 And **pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests**. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people