

Union United Methodist Church

Sermon Outline: **Victorious Living in Christ 1: Our Spiritual Authority**

September 28th, 2022. Pastor Michael Larbi

Readings: **Ephesians 1:16-23, Mark 16:9-18**

1. **Definitions: What is Spiritual Authority?**

- **Dictionary definitions**

There are many definitions of the word "authority."

The applicable definitions that explain spiritual authority well include:

"the moral or legal right or ability to control."

Cambridge dictionary

"power to influence or command thought, opinion, or behavior."

e.g., the president's authority

"freedom granted by one in authority : **RIGHT**"

e.g., who gave you the *authority* to do as you wish?

Miriam-Webster dictionary

Authority can also mean a person with special knowledge - what is known as a *subject matter expert*. Such people are, for instance, called upon to give expert witness in court. That kind of authority is not our focus here.

- **Spiritual Authority:**

The Greek word **exousia** (authority, power, right) is the word in the New Testament passages that describe the authority referred to in this sermon:

- Ability to control unseen spiritual forces or beings, thereby effecting change in the natural visible world
- The ability to effect change in our circumstances
- In the sense of exercising authority, it is not about being very knowledgeable or a subject matter expert

For a Christian, exercising spiritual authority is about exercising the authority given to us by Jesus Christ, who is the Head of the Church, the body of Christ.

2. The Authority of Christ Jesus

- **The Anointing at Work: Demonstrable Authority**

During his in-person earthly ministry, Jesus exercised authority over nature, diseases, demons, etc. Examples,

- **Authority over disease:**

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

- **Authority over demons /evil spirits**

"In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an impure spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, "Go away! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

"Be quiet!" Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him.

All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What words these are! **With authority and power he gives orders to impure spirits and they come out!**" Luke 4:33-36 NIV

- **Authority over nature**

37 A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" **39 He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.** 40 He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" 41 And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" Mark 4:37-41

- **The Authority Jesus Has Now - After his death and resurrection.**
 - **“He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death even death on a cross. 9Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”** Philippians 2:8-11 NRSV
 - After his resurrection,
 - “18And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**
Matthew 28:18-20 NRSV
 - **Head of the Church**
 - “He [God] has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, 23which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”** Ephesians 1:22-23 NRSV

3. **Our Authority in Christ**

The spiritual authority we have and can exercise in the name of Jesus is delegated authority. In a legal sense it is similar what we know as power of attorney.

- **Delegated Authority - Jesus to his 12 disciples**
 - “1Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, 2and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. 6They departed and went through the villages, bringing the good news and curing diseases everywhere.”**
Luke 9:1-2,6 NRSV

- **Delegated Authority - to all disciples of Jesus**

“15 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.16Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.17And **these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues;18they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”** Mark 16:15-18 NIV

This aligns with Matthew:

“**18And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.** 19Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. **And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**”

Matthew 28:18-20 NRSV

4. **Paul’s Prayer for the Church - to wake up to what is already ours in Christ**

This is a prayer we should constantly pray for ourselves.:

Note ... same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available for us! We are Jesus’ body and he will exercise His authority through us.

17 I pray **that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, 18so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, 19and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.** 20God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. 22And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, 23which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. Ephesians 1:17-23