

“I Am Commissioned with Authority”

Series: Identity: Becoming Who We Are

June 4, 2017 – Brad Bailey

Luke 10:1-4, 8-9, 17-21 (NLT)

The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places he planned to visit. ²

These were his instructions to them: “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields. ³ Now go, and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves.

⁴ Don’t take any money with you, nor a traveler’s bag, nor an extra pair of sandals.⁸ “If you enter a town and it welcomes you, eat whatever is set before you. ⁹ Heal the sick, and tell them, ‘The Kingdom of God is near you now.’

...¹⁷ When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, “Lord, even the demons obey us when we use (the power and authority of) your name!” ¹⁸ “Yes,” he told them, “I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning! ¹⁹ Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. ²⁰ But don’t rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven.” ²¹ At that same time Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit, and he said, “O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way.

1. The _____ power over our lives is

_____.

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” - Ephesians 6:12

2. In Christ, I am _____ as an agent of spiritual authority.

- Spiritual authority is never about anything in ourselves, it is about embracing _____ authority we have been _____ to exercise.
- Spiritual authority is not that which presumes we simply escape all _____ and _____, but rather it is that which confronts the ultimate freedom of the enemy.
- Spiritual authority is not just _____, but expansive and _____.

“I Am Commissioned with Authority”

Series: Identity: Becoming Who We Are

June 4, 2017 – Brad Bailey

Intro

Let me ask you to consider this question: Do you have authority against the forces of this world?

That is the question we dare ask as we continue our focus this season in identity... on how God speaks and works to restore our true selves.

I invite us to hear what God has to say to us about our authority.

Luke 10:1-4, 8-9, 17-21 (NLT)

The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them ahead in pairs to all the towns and places he planned to visit. ² These were his instructions to them: “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields. ³ Now go, and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. ⁴ Don’t take any money with you, nor a traveler’s bag, nor an extra pair of sandals.⁸ “If you enter a town and it welcomes you, eat whatever is set before you. ⁹ Heal the sick, and tell them, ‘The Kingdom of God is near you now.’

...¹⁷ When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, “Lord, even the demons obey us when we use (the power and authority of) your name!” ¹⁸ “Yes,” he told them, “I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning! ¹⁹ Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. ²⁰ But don’t rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven.” ²¹ At that same time Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit, and he said, “O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way.

So what’s going on in this text? A lot. There’s a lot that could consider.

But at the center of this exchange is a defining moment...**in which the authority of heaven is being extended to human lives. [1]**

You catch a sense of WOW.

What do you think they felt? Surprised? Shocked? Yea. And I would add...CHANGED. It changes how one relates to everything.

In Christ, the Creator of all has come into enemy territory declaring the rule and reign of God is being restored. It’s a spiritual conflict. And to appreciate what had been claimed for the glory and control of another...and now that is being made available to those who are united with him.

I want to note the two main points that we can't miss.

1. The ultimate power over our lives is spiritual.

These lives knew there were spiritual powers...it ran through their history. BUT when human rulers take control of your land...and human forces strike down your people long enough...one begins to think only of them. It was hard not to think that the force of evil wore a Roman helmet...and carried the force of swords and shields. So they had become focused on political powers.

But Jesus knew that there was a larger work at play. He knew long ago a spiritual vie had been made to seek the glory that was God's...and sought it in all God had created. That spiritual entity had drawn those created to bear God's image to trust him rather than God. And as a result that evil force has ruled over creation and all human life.

As the Scriptures explain....

Ephesians 6:12 (NIV)

“... our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

There are **spiritual forces** that **draw upon the human will**...and drive it.

This is something that **those in Asia and Africa**...have **little doubt about**...only modern westerners seem confused

This is **difficult for us** who are **products of the Western “enlightenment” phase**... in which western culture **became so enamored with human reasoning** that we began to assume everything is **just a matter of rational deduction**. We are so enamored with our abilities to control things...we **only value what we can control**... or at least believe we will ultimately be able to understand and control. So we dismiss anything spiritual...unseen... we are not able to master within our faculties.

Our culture has **tried to imagine that we are now “beyond” any mystery in our world**... that there's nothing we can't explain...can't control... that it's **time to “move on”** from acknowledging a soiritual dimension.

> **But the questions are still there**....the nature of **evil is still there**.

Andrew Delbanco is a **professor at Columbia University**, who wrote a book called *The Death of Satan: How Americans Have Lost the Sense of Evil*.

While trying to maintain his secular uncertainty... he dared to declare the honest truth about the modern western denial of evil. In the opening lines of this book he wrote the following:

“A gulf has opened in our culture between the visibility of evil, and the intellectual resources to cope with it.....we have jettisoned in the west the idea of cosmic evil or transcendent evil or supernatural evil. We don't believe in it. In fact, we don't even like to use the word evil because it implies moral absolutes and value judgments. So we use medical terms. We talk about dysfunction. We talk about pathology. We don't use moral terminology. But as the 20th century has gone on it has gotten harder and harder to say that holocaust's and ethnic cleansing and serial killing is just bad psychological and sociological adjustments.”

Delbanco concludes that as the 20th century wore on,

“...what we said 150 years ago, that all evil has natural causes, has scientific causes – it is wearing thin.” [2]

The nature of spiritual forces and evil have been growing and **growing in the TV shows and movies that draw the most attention. Look at the line up of TV shows** that are centered in the nature of spiritual powers of evil. Something is at work around us and within us.

The Bible is clear that there are spiritual forces...from the first Book of Genesis...through the calling out of a new nation of Israel to all the conflicts they face...to all that Jesus confronts and teaches so in Jesus... what is revealed is the larger reality we are a part of. [2b]

This is something we all would be wise to stop...and dare to face.

You never really have power until you know who you are fighting.

Are your struggles really just a matter of you and your desires?

Do we live in a world in which there is no evil we won't simply progress through?

The truth is: You never really have power until you know who you are fighting.

Jesus came to engage the cosmic reality...in which far more is at hand.

Now some have used the reality of spiritual powers to relegate everything out there. That is not the intent of what Jesus implied...nor what Paul intended.

The Bible is clear that evil is not just out there.... disconnected from human will and working.

Evil is ultimately all that refuses good... which flows from God.

Evil is systemic.

The Scriptures depict the spiritual challenge of life as an inter-related working of the "devil" (fallen spiritual realm,) our "flesh" (disposition of our fallen nature,) and the "world" (a corporate evil that can develop in a social system.). [3]

But the **force behind the force**... that draws and drives us...who we sold ourselves to...is the **spiritual force of evil**.

And all of that **leads to the second element** God declares to us...

2. In Christ, I am commissioned as an agent of spiritual authority.

There is more than just some random choice to extend authority to human life. Some may recall that in the Biblical account of creation... God created human life to have authority over the world. So that is being restored. Christ is reconciling life with God... and then... united with him... re-commissioning that life once again.

It began with that sending out of 12 and then these 72 lives...in search of those who will also become laborers of the cause....which is us.

He “**commissioned**” them. He **authorized them with authority**. **In the days of the old west we might have said he deputized them.** [4]

A police officer weighing 160 pounds may effectively stand before a tanker truck and, with an uplifted hand, say, “***Stop, in the name of the law.***” The police officer certainly couldn’t stop the truck with his physical force. He is appealing to an authority greater than himself — the law — to back him up.

Or consider this in football terms. You have a linebacker on the field, well over 6 feet tall, weighing 300+ pounds. He’s muscular. He’s strong—he’s powerful. Standing nose-to-nose with him is a man in a black and white striped shirt. He’s 5’8 and weighs 150. He has a little yellow handkerchief in his back pocket. When he pulls it out and throws it on the ground, the linebacker—and all the other 300-pounders—stop in their tracks. What’s more, if things don’t go well, the 150-lb. referee can send the 300-lb. linebacker to the showers. The linebacker has POWER. But the ref has AUTHORITY.

The commission extends to all who unite with him.

We need to hear this...really hear this.

“Look, I have given you authority... over all the power of the enemy...” - Luke 10:19

How do you receive those words?

When you think of having authority...my sense is that for some it may seem natural... you operate with a lot of natural confidence...and personal authority. For some...it is hard to “feel” authority... you may experience feeling more powerlessness... not naturally confident in what you have to say... or what difference you make.

We need to recognize something. To Jesus... your natural sense of authority is irrelevant.

> For Jesus your personal authority is irrelevant. Political authority is irrelevant to spiritual authority...because in ourselves...we have none.

To those who feel connected to the powers of this world... political, personal...I want to encourage you to stop and realize that your natural confidence may help but it may also deceive you... to be more reliant of your own resources....on natural authority that is not the same as spiritual authority

And to those who feel powerless... who may face bouts of defeat ... I want to encourage you to stop and realize... you may allowing your social disposition and social position to define your spiritual authority.

When we exercise spiritual authority... we understand it is never OUR authority... it is his authority extended to us.

What did these first disciples say when they returned?

“...when we use (the power and authority of) your name!” – Luke 10:17

Using a name was not a matter of some magical formula... as if the “name” itself has power. A name refers to what one represents. Like when we say: They are making a great name for themselves.

So what we have is the authority that lies in Jesus...with whom we are united and are authorized with authority. [5]

So a few things we should realize about this spiritual authority.

A few quick points about this authority...

1. Spiritual authority is never about anything in ourselves, it is about embracing Christ's authority we have been authorized to exercise.

Spiritual authority is not about confidence in our natural personal authority... it is about taking hold of Christ's authority.

It is not dependent on our feelings...but on Him.

This whole process of bringing his authority to those who unite with him is marked by dependency...by removing any dependency on human power.

Who'd he choose? Those who had positions of power? No he chose those who didn't.

And how did he send them out with authority? With a pep talk that told them... 'You are powerful guys... total winners... just be confident in yourselves. !'

“Now go, and remember that I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. Don’t take any money with you, nor a traveler’s bag, nor an extra pair of sandals.” – Luke 10:3-4

No extra money, supplies, or sandals.

He is creating that which will **separate them from their self-reliance.**

When I read the position he put them in...**I feel a little tension...their tension...my tension.**

He’s not telling them that we shouldn’t work and be responsible for life’s needs. But if going to **confront territory** that the **enemy holds... you need to be dependent.**

As they go and return...Jesus smiles...and thanks the Father...and what does he see working? The dependent are getting it.

“Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit, and he said, “O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way.” – Luke 10 :21

We can hear his joy...because these disciples had been able to realize they were dependent. Unlike those who think they can rely on their own strengths... this group had experienced the power that lies beyond themselves. This is why Jesus looks at the faith of children with a smile. They haven’t bought into the powers of the world yet... physical, political, personal.

We often depend on God more freely when we’re children. As we begin to join the adult world we find we have some human power...and lose our sense of dependence. That is why Jesus came to his emerging adult disciples and imparted his authority by making it clear they would have to rely on God working.

It is the very way in which Jesus lived and made possible.

When Jesus was living and ministering on earth, he was living and ministering as true man. Jesus as true God became true man. In that unique personage, he is both God and man. When he was ministering on earth, though, he was ministering in the capacity as man without falling back as a safety net on his attributes as God. He was showing us what a human being living in right relationship with God can live like. [6]

And when we follow Jesus in confronting the spiritual forces of this world... we find that...

2. Spiritual authority is not that which presumes we simply escape all troubles and suffering, but rather it is that which confronts the ultimate freedom of the enemy.

The authority of Jesus has come into enemy controlled territory...and it is not time yet to bring a final judgment...so evil still is at work...but it’s end is settled. [7]

You may get bitten but you will ultimately crush them.

Jesus was clear... ***“In the world you have trouble and suffering, but take courage--I have conquered the world.” - John 16:33 (NET)***

Jesus wants us to know that when we are united with him...we are united with eternity. And so he shares in their joy but told them...

“Don’t rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven.” – Luke 10:20

Finally...

3. Spiritual authority is not just defensive, but expansive and advancing.

The whole context of what was at hand... tells us something significant about the nature of spiritual conflict and spiritual authority. **He was sending them out.**

He doesn’t huddle them together and tell them how to hide and hope that the spiritual forces of evil never come attack you. He tells them to unite in taking back more territory ...in your life...or in others.

I have had moments in which I have felt the presence of evil... a very tangible presence that I can only describe as being as if a personal presence was at hand... and clearly evil. Some of you may have experienced moments like that as well. Sometimes it bears a heavy sense of fear... or a disturbing sense of darkness.

> I’ve discovered power when I call on the name of Jesus. I don’t really feel overwhelmed when such encounters comes....because I have actually experienced the power of sincerely calling on Jesus. I have consistently experienced what the Bible says:

“The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.” – I John 4:4

I’ve also discovered that while I may have felt I was simply being threatened...and in a posture of defending whatever influence was at hand if I reflected on what was going on in or through my life ...I realized that there were some choices I was making towards God... some movement forward...and it was the enemy who was feeling threatened.

CLOSING: Is there some territory God wants you to move forward in taking back from the enemy... territory in your own life...or in others?

Notes:

1. This commission is first given to the core 12 disciples earlier, as recorded in Luke 9:1-6.

2. Delbanco then draws upon a scene in “Silence of the Lambs” about the character Hannibal Lector

Young police woman Officer Starling...first meets Lector. What happened to make him like this. He hears her. And responds: “Nothing happened to me, Officer Starling. I happened. You can’t reduce me to a set of influences. You’ve given up good and evil for behaviorism, Officer Starling. You’ve got everybody in moral dignity pants—nothing is ever anybody’s fault. Look at me, Officer Starling. Can you stand to say I’m evil? Am I evil, Officer Starling?” — **Thomas Harris, The Silence of the Lambs**

Delbanco then notes... Modern people cannot answer the monster’s question.

2b. The devil is truly our enemy. As other texts describe:

He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. - **2 Thessalonians 2:4 (NIV)**

He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. - **John 8:44 (NLT)**

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy - John 10:10 (NIV)

3. Regarding the recognition of three elements of evil at hand...

“In Christian theology, **the world, the flesh, and the devil** are often traditionally described as the three Enemy of the soul. As the sources of temptation, they are sometimes opposed to the Trinity.

The roots of this triad are possibly to be found in Jesus' parable of the Sower: the three scenes of unproductive soil represent "Satan" (birds eating the seed), shallow and unreceptive believers (corresponding to weak "flesh"?), and "the cares of the world and the lure of wealth" (Gospel of Mark 4:15–17). These three are also present as a triad in the Letter to the Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1–3: "You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course of this **world**, following **the ruler of the power of the air**, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. All of us once lived among them in the passions of our **flesh**, following the desires of flesh and senses..." (Wikipedia)

Henry Morris adds,

"This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish." (James 3:15)

True wisdom is "from above" and is "pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (v. 17). False wisdom, on the other hand, may come from the world outside us ("earthly"), the flesh within us ("sensual"),

or the powers of darkness tempting us ("devilish"). All such wisdom leads to "envying and strife . . . confusion and every evil work" (v. 16). Believers, therefore, should be able to recognize the influences of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The good news is that each divine Person of the Triune Godhead is on our side. The Father is opposed to the world, the Spirit to the flesh, and the Son to the devil, and they are well able to give victory.

"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. . . . And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof" ([1 John 2:15, 17](#)). Thus, to overcome the love of the world, we must cultivate the love of the Father in our hearts and lives.

Similarly, to overcome the desires of the flesh, we should follow the leadings and convictions of the Holy Spirit, "for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other" ([Galatians 5:17](#)). Therefore, "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (v. 16).

The devil and his evil hosts use their own dark powers to tempt and destroy the people of God, but "for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" ([1 John 3:8](#)). Christ assured Satan's defeat when He paid for our redemption on the cross. "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." ([Colossians 2:15](#)). (From Henry M. Morris, Ph.D "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil")

4. This authorization is also spoken by Jesus Christ to the Apostle Peter in the Bible at Matthew 16:19 - "I will give you **the keys to the kingdom** of heaven...". Keys are the authority to access...to lock and unlock.

5. The "use" of the "name" of Jesus reflects that which truly is lifting his "name" which means truly lifting up who he truly is... God...who became incarnate...and defeated the powers of his world. Such authority transcends that which is bound to any particular institutional form (Mark 9: 38-41)...nor can it be used as some magical formula (Acts 19: 13-17.) The authority resides in the person of Jesus.

6. We too should see that our authority is not simply about confronting evil in this realm...but belonging to the eternal realm. We read: "You belong to God, and ...God's Spirit is in you and is more powerful than the one that is in the world." - 1 John 4:4 (CEV

7. In Mark 9 and Matthew 17 we have account of time when disciples had not been able to deliver a possessed man who was then brought to Jesus. This helps us grasp that operating with power and authority is not a simple magical formula ...but a spiritual battle.