

“A Man with Authority”

Summary

This powerful exploration of spiritual authority challenges us to move beyond religious titles and empty words to discover what it truly means to walk in heaven's power. Drawing from Mark's Gospel where observers marveled at Jesus teaching with authority unlike the scribes and Pharisees, we're confronted with a crucial question: what's the difference between merely having a title and actually carrying God's authority? The answer lies in relationship and positioning. The centurion's remarkable faith reveals the secret—he understood that authority flows from being 'under' before we can be 'over' anything. This isn't about earning God's favor through performance, but about surrendering our own agendas and kingdom-building efforts to align with His purposes. When Jesus silenced the demon in the synagogue, He demonstrated that true authority isn't found in volume, style, or religious credentials, but in intimate connection with the Father. We're invited to examine our own lives: are we content with religious activities that produce no real change, or are we hungry for the kind of authority that makes demons tremble and storms obey? The path forward requires patience, endurance, and a willingness to stay under God's hand even when pressure tempts us to escape. As we humble ourselves and surrender daily to His lordship, we position ourselves to receive the delegated authority Jesus promised His followers—authority that heaven actually backs up.

Small Group Study Guide – A Man with Authority

Opening Prayer (2-3 minutes)

Begin by asking God to help your group see Jesus as He truly is and to understand the nature of His authority in your lives.

Icebreaker (5-10 minutes)

Question: Share about a time when you witnessed or experienced genuine spiritual authority (not just religious performance). What made it different?

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Jesus taught with authority, not like the scribes and Pharisees** - His authority came from relationship with the Father, not from titles or positions.
 2. **Authority is delegated influence** - We don't possess authority independently; it's given to us through our relationship with Jesus.
 3. **Authority will always be tested** - When genuine authority shows up, spiritual opposition often increases.
 4. **Authority requires being "under"** - To walk in God's authority, we must remain under His authority through surrender and patience.
 5. **Motives matter** - God won't entrust His authority to those seeking their own glory rather than His kingdom.
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Discussion Questions

Understanding Authority (15-20 minutes)

1. The centurion said, "I too am a man under authority." What does it mean to be "under" God's authority in practical, everyday terms?
2. Pastor Rob mentioned that titles and volume don't equal authority. What are some false indicators of spiritual authority we might be tempted to rely on instead of genuine relationship with God?
3. Read Mark 1:21-27. Why were people astonished at Jesus' teaching? What's the difference between religious knowledge and Spirit-empowered authority?

Personal Application (15-20 minutes)

4. The sermon highlighted that "you only feel pressure when you resist." Where in your life are you currently feeling pressure? Could it be related to resisting God's timing or plan?
5. Pastor Rob confessed his struggle during the rain at the parade, realizing he was trying to use the "right tone of voice" rather than genuine faith. When have you tried to manufacture spiritual results rather than trusting God's authority?
6. Hebrews 10:35-36 says, "Do not cast away your confidence...you have need of endurance." What situation are you tempted to "bail on" right now? How might staying under God's hand lead to receiving His promise?

Going Deeper (10-15 minutes)

7. Jesus said His words are "spirit and life" (John 6:63). How can we cultivate the kind of relationship with God where our words carry His authority rather than just being religious speech?

8. The sermon mentioned that devils aren't as concerned with our preaching as they are with us being with God and then preaching. What does this reveal about the source of true spiritual authority?

9. Matthew 28:18-20 - Jesus said "All authority...has been given to me. Go therefore..." How does understanding Jesus' complete authority change the way you approach His commission to make disciples?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: The Surrender Practice

- Each morning this week, consciously pray: "Jesus, I come under Your authority today. I surrender [specific area] to You."
- Journal about what happens when you resist versus when you surrender.

Option 2: The Authority Audit

- Identify one area where you've been trying to operate in your own strength/authority
- Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal the difference between self-effort and Spirit-empowered authority
- Ask God what it would look like to "stay under" His hand in this area

Option 3: The Patience Test

- Identify something you're waiting on God for
- Instead of trying to force timing or outcomes, practice daily surrender
- Record what God shows you about His timing versus yours

Accountability Questions for Next Week

1. Where did you experience pressure to "come out from under" God's authority this week?
2. Did you stay the course or bail? What happened?

3. What did you learn about the difference between positional authority and relational authority?
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Prayer Focus (10-15 minutes)

Personal Reflection (Silent - 2 minutes) Ask yourself: "Where am I trying to have authority without being under authority?"

Group Prayer

- Pray for each person to encounter Jesus as He truly is - the One with all authority
- Ask God to reveal any areas where group members are resisting His authority
- Pray for patience and endurance to stay under God's hand even when pressure increases
- Ask for genuine spiritual authority to flow through your lives as you surrender to Jesus

Closing Declaration (Pray together) "Jesus, we acknowledge that all authority belongs to You. We choose to come under Your lordship today. Help us stay under Your hand, even when tested. We receive Your authority not as something we've earned, but as a gift flowing from relationship with You. Empower us to be Your representatives in the earth. In Your name, Amen."

Main Points – A Man with Authority

What Manner of Man Is This? Part 29

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the nature of Jesus Christ as a man of authority, examining how His authority differs from religious titles and positions. The message emphasizes that true spiritual authority comes from being under God's authority, not from positions, titles, or loud proclamations. Jesus demonstrated authority through His teaching, His power over demons, and His commissioning of believers. The sermon challenges listeners to remain under God's authority even during trials and pressure, explaining that God entrusts His authority to those whose motives are pure and who seek His glory rather than their own. The central theme is that believers receive delegated authority from Christ, but this authority is tested and proven through patient endurance and staying under God's hand during difficult seasons.

Key Points:

- Authority is not found in titles, clothing, or volume, but in the anointing and presence of God
- The Greek word "exousia" means delegated influence, emphasizing that authority is given, not taken
- When genuine authority manifests, demonic forces will challenge and test it
- God will not entrust His authority to those seeking their own glory or kingdom-building
- The centurion understood authority because he was a man "under" authority, demonstrating the principle that to have authority, one must be under authority
- The word "under" (hupo) is related to patience and endurance, meaning we must stay under God's hand during pressure
- Promotion and authority come from God, not from our own efforts or circumstances
- Jesus has all authority in heaven and earth, and He commissions believers to operate in that authority through relationship with Him
- We must not "come out from under" God's authority when facing trials, but remain faithful to our assignment

Scripture Reference:

- Mark 4:40-41 (Primary theme verse: "What manner of man is this?")
- Mark 1:21-28 (Jesus teaching with authority and casting out demons)
- Matthew 8:5-13 (The centurion's faith and understanding of authority)
- Luke 20:1-8 (Religious leaders questioning Jesus' authority)
- Hebrews 10:32-39 (Endurance and not casting away confidence)
- Psalm 75:4-7 (Promotion comes from the Lord)
- Matthew 28:18-20 (The Great Commission - all authority given to Jesus)
- 1 Peter 5:6 (Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God)

Discussion Questions – A Man with Authority

How does the distinction between having a religious title and possessing genuine spiritual authority challenge our understanding of church leadership today?

In what ways might we be settling for a version of Jesus that is convenient rather than pursuing the real Jesus who transforms us?

The centurion understood authority because he lived under it - how does our willingness to submit to God's authority determine the level of authority He can trust us with?

When Jesus told the demon to be silent despite it speaking truth, what does this teach us about discernment and the source of words versus their content?

How do we distinguish between petitioning God in faith versus telling God what to do, and why does this distinction matter for walking in authority?

What does it mean practically to stay under the hand of God when every circumstance is pressuring you to come out from under His authority?

The sermon says that illumination often precedes great struggle - why does God allow testing after revelation, and how does this relate to developing genuine authority?

If promotion comes through adversity from the north rather than from our own efforts, how should this change our response to difficult seasons?

How can we tell if our motivation for seeking spiritual authority is for God's kingdom or for building our own reputation and influence?

What does it look like for a nation or community to genuinely be under God rather than simply using religious language while pursuing its own agenda?

Scriptures – A Man with Authority

Explicitly Mentioned Scripture References:

1. **Mark 4:40-41** - "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" / "What manner of man is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?"
2. **Mark 1:21-28** - Jesus teaching with authority in the synagogue; the man with an unclean spirit
3. **Acts 16** - Woman with spirit of divination/python following Paul and Silas
4. **Job 6:25** - "How forceful are upright words"
5. **Luke 20:1-8** - Chief priests and scribes questioning Jesus' authority
6. **1 Peter 5:6** - "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God"
7. **Matthew 8:5-13** - The centurion's faith and understanding of authority
8. **Hebrews 10:32-39** - "Do not cast away your confidence" / endurance and patience
9. **Psalms 75:4-7** - Promotion comes from the Lord (not from east, west, or south)
10. **Matthew 28:18-20** - The Great Commission - "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me"

Alluded to or Paraphrased Scripture:

11. **1 John 3:2** - "When we see Him as He is, we shall be like Him"
12. **2 Corinthians 11:4** - Paul's concern about receiving "another Jesus" or "a different spirit"
13. **Isaiah 45:11** - "Command ye me" (referenced as God saying this)
14. **Luke 19:10** - Jesus came to seek and to save the lost
15. **Matthew 6:10** - "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"
16. **John 6:63** - "My words are spirit and life"
17. **John 5:19** - "I only do what I see the Father doing"
18. **Matthew 10:8** - "Raise the dead, heal the sick, cleanse the leper"

Devotional – A Man with Authority

Day 1: The Foundation of True Authority

Reading: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 1:21-28

Devotional: True authority isn't found in titles, volume, or religious performance. When Jesus taught, people recognized something fundamentally different—He spoke with authority that came from His intimate relationship with the Father. The demons recognized it immediately and were forced to respond. Today, examine your own life: Are you seeking authority through external credentials, or are you cultivating the deep relationship with God that produces authentic spiritual power? Authority flows from intimacy with Jesus. The world is desperately waiting to encounter believers who carry the genuine presence of God, not just religious language. Spend time today simply being with Jesus, knowing that transformation comes from beholding Him as He truly is.

Day 2: Coming Under to Go Over

Reading: Matthew 8:5-13; 1 Peter 5:6-10

Devotional: The centurion understood a revolutionary principle: you cannot exercise authority unless you first submit to authority. He recognized that Jesus operated under the Father's authority, and that same structure applied to his own life. God's kingdom operates on the principle of "under"—we must position ourselves under God's hand before He can entrust us with authority over circumstances. This requires humility, surrender, and patience. When pressure mounts and you want to escape your assignment, remember: the fastest way forward is surrender. God is not withholding from you; He's preparing you. Stay under His hand. Don't forfeit what He wants to give you by coming out prematurely. Your faithfulness in the hidden place determines your effectiveness in the public sphere.

Day 3: Tested and Proven

Reading: Hebrews 10:32-39; Luke 20:1-8

Devotional: Every revelation brings a corresponding test. After illumination comes situation—the struggle that burns truth deep into your character. Jesus' authority was constantly challenged, and yours will be too. Don't be surprised when opposition arises after spiritual breakthrough; see it as confirmation that you're threatening another kingdom. The religious leaders questioned Jesus' authority with wrong motives, and He wisely refused to answer. God is not obligated to respond to questions asked with impure hearts. Your authority will be tested in the "north"—the place of adversity and cold winds. Will you stay faithful when the pressure is on? Will you maintain your confession when circumstances contradict your prayers? Don't cast away your confidence. Endurance produces the character necessary to carry greater authority.

Day 4: Motives Matter

Reading: Luke 4:5-8; John 5:30, 41-44

Devotional: Jesus lived entirely for the Father's glory, and this pure motivation qualified Him to carry unlimited authority. God cannot entrust His power to those seeking their own kingdom, their own fame, their own vindication. Before you cry out for more authority, examine your heart: Whose kingdom are you building? Authority in God's hands without pure motives becomes destructive, not redemptive. The religious leaders had titles, structures, and influence, yet their synagogue harbored demons. Outward position means nothing without inward alignment. Ask God to search your heart today. Surrender any hidden ambition, any desire for recognition, any need to prove yourself. When your singular focus becomes pleasing the Father, He can trust you with the kind of authority that changes atmospheres and transforms lives.

Day 5: Commissioned and Empowered

Reading: Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8

Devotional: Jesus declared that ALL authority had been given to Him, then immediately commissioned His followers to go. This wasn't a suggestion—it was a transfer of delegated authority. You are not earning authority; you're accepting an assignment that comes with heaven's backing. But here's the key: this authority flows through relationship, not independence. "I am with you always" isn't just comfort—it's the source of your power. You cannot operate in Jesus' authority apart from abiding in Him. As you go into your world today, recognize that you carry the image of the One who has all authority. Your presence matters. Your words carry weight when they flow from intimacy with God. Don't shrink back from your assignment. Heaven is waiting to back up what God has called you to do.

Reflection Question for the Week: In what area of your life is God asking you to "stay under" His hand rather than escape the pressure? How might patient endurance in this place position you for greater authority?