THE AUTHORITY AND THE POWER

Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me'. —MATTHEW 28:18

In the above verse, some translations use the word "power" in place of authority. The original Greek word is "exousia" which literally means power in the sense of authority. This is the power that belongs to a president or a king, and in this context, speaks of the position as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

In Acts 1:8, Jesus told His disciples, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you." The word Jesus uses here is the Greek word "dunamis" from which the English words 'dynamic' and 'dynamite' are derived. This means power in the sense of sheer ability. 'Exousia' and 'dunamis' must be understood together.

To illustrate, a number of years ago I travelled on an overnight bus from Glasgow to London. A few miles into the journey, it became quite clear one of the passengers was inebriated and being a nuisance to other passengers. After several complaints, the bus driver parked on the side of the road and asked the man to get off the bus. The man totally ignored him and simply stared out the window. The disturbance continued and after several more complaints which met with the same contempt, the bus driver turned off the main road, drove into a little town and parked outside a

police station. The driver got out and came back with two big Scottish policemen who had to forcibly escort the man off the bus.

Though the bus driver had the authority to order the man to disembark the bus, he did not have the power to make it happen. Authority without power is somewhat pathetic and useless. On the other hand, power without authority is dangerous. We only need to look at acts of terrorism around the world. There is plenty of dynamism with the ability to carry acts out, but no legitimate authority to do so.

In Jesus Christ we have both the authority and the power to make things happen. We must never detach the Lordship of Christ over our lives from the dynamism of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This comes together in the statement of Paul, "The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it" (1 Thessalonians 5:24). As God in Christ calls us to do something, so God the Spirit enables us to do it. In other words, there will never be any demand made upon us by the Lord Jesus that the Holy Spirit will not provide the empowerment to accomplish.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, help me to depend wholly on the working of your indwelling Spirit to accomplish what You have called me to do. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I rest in both the authority and power of Jesus in what He has called me to do?