



MISSION POSSIBLE | WEEK FOUR
MARCH 26, 2017

+ Week Four | March 26th
AUTHORITY DELEGATED FOR OUR MISSION

“...with God
everything

is possible.”

matt 19:26



PREPARATION

+ *MONDAY - WEDNESDAY*

Read through Matthew 28:18-20, Matthew 4:1-11, and Matthew 18:15-20. Pray that God, through His Spirit, would bring to life the truths of this text.

+ *THURSDAY - SATURDAY*

Many questions have been included, so read through and determine which of those questions will work well to encourage, push, and grow your group in the best way.

+ *DAILY*

As you prepare, pray for the preaching of God's Word this coming week at the corporate church gathering. Pray also for your time in this week's study.



THIS WEEK

+ *KEY BIBLICAL TRUTH*

Jesus has all authority from the Father, and he delegates that authority to us to preach the gospel, prevail over the enemy, and protect other believers.

+ *THEOLOGY APPLIED*

As we walk in the authority Jesus delegates, that is, preaching, prevailing, and protecting, we become more and more like Him over time.



GETTING STARTED

+ Use this section to prepare your heart and mind for the truths of this week. This section will help to introduce the focus of this week's lesson.

Q: How does our culture view authority?

Q: Representatives and ambassadors speak and act on behalf of an important figure (President, King, etc.). How do we ensure they have been granted the right to do so?

Q: In what ways do parents delegate their authority to their kids? Bosses to their employees?

| THE NATURE OF AUTHORITY

While authority structures may not be the most popular subject in our culture, they are a reality of life. Parents have authority over their kids. Pet owners have authority over their pets. Bosses have authority to hire and fire their employees. Governments have the authority to enforce the law. And ultimately, God has authority over the universe, including our world and all the people in it.

In all of these examples, authority can be delegated to someone else, should the person in charge decide to do so. A parent can authorize their teenager to drive the family car. A pet owner can give her pet authority to roam certain parts of the yard. Governments can authorize representatives to speak on their behalf when making diplomatic decisions overseas. And, yes, God can delegate authority to people in certain ways, too.

As we saw in this week's sermon, Jesus demonstrated great authority in his ministry. Time and time again, he proclaimed that his great authority was given into his hands by the Father himself, not by a panel of elite religious men. As we seek to be like him, we too must walk in the authority God has delegated to us.

Q: How does it feel when you are called to do a certain task, but have been granted no clearance or authority to do so?

Q: Share a time when someone delegated their authority to you.



Understanding the Text

Jesus himself walked in the authority that God provided. Of many things, Jesus had the authority to preach good news, to prevail over the enemy, and to protect his followers from straying. To become more like Jesus, we too must walk in the authority Jesus delegates to us in the same areas:

- 1. Authority to Preach**
- 2. Authority to Prevail**
- 3. Authority to Protect**



GOING DEEPER

+ *This next section will help to show what God's Word says about this week's particular focus. Walk through the Scripture passages, connecting the text to this week's biblical truth.*

| POWER THAT STRENGTHENS



Read Matthew 28:18-20; John 17:2-8,14,18, 22; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Q: What kind of authority has been given to Jesus? (Matt 28:18)

Q: Knowing this, what does he commission us to do? (Matt 28:19-20)

Q: The Father sent Jesus to give what to us? (John 17:8,14)

In New Testament times, aspiring rabbis received their authority to interpret and teach the Scriptures from a rare, elite group of teachers. To become one of these teachers, you had to be a master of the Torah, give new, impressive insights into the Scriptures, and prove your authority by working miracles. Rabbis with this type of power and authority were very rare—there are only about a dozen of them who are recognized in the first century. On top of this, to gain access to having this kind of preaching power, authority had to be officially conferred on you by the hands of two other authorized teachers. Needless to say, preaching with authority in Bible times was something designated for a small, exclusive club of teachers. Not just anyone had the right to preach with authority. It was a privilege granted to someone by the elite.

The religious leaders in the gospels found Jesus' preaching remarkable and authoritative, but they couldn't figure out the source of his authority (Luke 4:22; Matt.7:29, 21:23; Mark 1:22, 11:28; Luke 20:2). Yes, he did miracles. Yes, he offered insights into the Scriptures that confounded everyone. But who granted him the authority? Who was the entity that conferred his power upon him, who anointed him to preach this way? As these leaders looked around at each other, it was clear none of them had done this. Who in the world authorized this man to preach with such power? Jesus made it very clear: the Father himself. Jesus didn't need a board of directors to bestow authority on him. He had the anointing of God himself to preach (Luke 4:18-19, 43-44; Matt. 11:27; John 17:2-6; Acts 4:27). More than that, he was God himself, and was not reliant on man to give him permission to preach (John 1:1, 14; John 9:36-37, 10:30; Col 2:9). His authority to preach was demonstrated in a myriad of ways throughout the gospels, and then his time came to return to the Father.

When it was time for Jesus to leave, he did not take his authority to preach with him. Instead, he delegated his preaching authority to his followers. They would be anointed by God as well to carry the good news to the world, continuing Jesus' work (Matt. 28:18-20; Matt. 16:19). As his followers walked in the authority he delegated to them to preach, they would cover more of the earth with the message of the good news, doing more than even he did in his earthly ministry (John 14:12-14)

Q: Jesus was sent with authority to share the good news from the Father. What does he do with that authority according to John 17:18?

Q: God delegated what to us, according to 2 Cor. 5:18?

Q: When Christ delegates his authority and mission to us, what do we become [2 Cor. 5:20]?

Just like in Bible times, our authority to preach the gospel is not given to us by people. In order to fulfill his work of proclaiming the good news to the world, Jesus delegates the authority the Father gave him to us. The Father gave Jesus the words of eternal life to share with us, and now we are commissioned to share them with others. Once we receive the Holy Spirit at our conversion to Christ, we can immediately preach the gospel to those around us, no exclusive ceremony required (Acts 9:17-20; Gal. 1:15-16)! Jesus authorizes all believers to proclaim the gospel to the world. Now that he has given us his authority to proclaim the good news, we have become his representatives to those around us, inviting them to be reconciled to the Father. Jesus had authority to proclaim the good news. To become more like him, we too must proclaim the good news in his authority; however, we must be granted it. God has given us this authority in order to make us more like his Son and to reach the world with his saving grace.

Q: What encourages you about the authority you've been given to proclaim the gospel?

Q: How does proclaiming the good news in God's authority make us more like Jesus?

| POWER TO PREVAIL



Read Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 22:31-32, and Ephesians 6:10-18

Q: What did Jesus rely on to prevail over the enemy's temptation? (Matt 4: 4,7,10)

Q: How does Jesus respond to Satan's demand to have Peter? (Luke 22:31-32)

Q: What does the armor of God help us do, according to Eph. 6:11?

Scripture tells us that Jesus has authority on earth and in heaven (Matt. 28:18; Dan. 7:13-14; Jn. 3:35, 5:27, 13:3, 17:2; Acts 2:36; Rom 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:10, 20-22; Phil. 2:9; Col 2:10; Heb. 1:2, 2:8; 1 Pet 3:22). This means that he does not just have total power merely over the earthly realm where he preaches and teaches, but also in the spiritual realm, which includes Satan and his schemes. Every time we see Jesus interacting with the enemy we see that he is totally in control and in authority over the situation (Mark 1:27, Acts 10:38, Matt 8:16). In fact, one of the primary reasons Jesus came was to prevail over the Evil One (1 John 3:8).

In his great grace to help us overcome Satan's attempts to hinder our sanctification, Jesus has given us authority over the enemy, too (Luke 10:17-20). To start, Jesus makes us aware of the enemy's character and schemes in God's Word (2 Cor. 2:11). Satan is a liar and a deceiver (John 8:44; Rev. 12:9) who does many things to thwart our mission of becoming more like Christ: he tempts us to turn away from the faith into sin (Acts 13:8-10), masquerades as an agent of light (2 Cor. 11:14), puts our minds on the things of earth instead of the things of heaven (Matt.16:23), tries to hinder the call of God on our lives (1 Thes. 2:18), traps believers into situations that would cause them to have a bad reputation in the community (1 Tim. 3:7), seeks to devour our faith and our life (1 Pet. 5:8), and holds the power to humanity's most insurmountable curse: death (Heb. 2:14). Being aware of these things is crucial if we want to prevail over the enemy and become more like Jesus.

Q: When we face battles in this life, who are we really fighting against, according to Eph. 6:12?

Q: Explain how each element of the armor of God helps you fight the enemy.

Q: Share a time when God used prayer, the Word, or the armor of God to help you prevail in a spiritual battle.

How do we prevail over these schemes of which we are now aware? To accomplish our mission of becoming more like Jesus, we must prevail over the enemy in the same ways Jesus does. Matthew 4 and Luke 22 show us a wonderful example of Jesus leaning into both the Word and prayer to prevail against the enemy, two non-negotiable weapons of Jesus that will always make Satan flee. Ephesians 6 also shows us how to prevail over the enemy—through the armor of God which helps us “put on Christ.”

While the enemy is a real threat, he is not a lethal one to us. We are given the power to resist him through all these measures, and when we do, he flees from us (James 4:7). As we pray, run to the Word, and put on the armor of God, we prevail over the devil in the authority God has delegated to us. And more than prevail in this lifetime, in the last day God will give us the authority to overcome Satan in full force, crushing him under our feet permanently (Rom. 16:20). Our mission of sanctification is the long-term battle to defeat sin and the power of the enemy in our lives. Glory be to God who gave us authority to prevail in this spiritual battle, and promised us that his indwelling power to make us more like Christ is greater than the enemy in our lives (1 John 4:4)!

| AUTHORITY TO PROTECT



Read Matthew 18:15-20, Ephesians 4:22-25, and Galatians 6:1-2, 10

Q: If a certain sin in another believer's life is harming you, what is the protocol for addressing their sin, according to Jesus in Matthew 18:15-20?

Q: In what type of spirit should you call out sin in another believer's life? (Gal. 6:1)

Q: What is the ultimate court of appeal if a person does not repent of sin? (Matt. 18:17)

As the one who created all life, Jesus has the authority to assess, judge, and correct us (John 5:27, Acts 10:42, 17:31). When he corrects, judges, or disciplines us, his goal is not our punishment but our healthiness, development, and protection as his children (Heb. 12:7-15, Deut. 8:5, Prov. 13:24, 29:15).

Before Jesus ascended to be with the Father, he delegated his authority to the church to correct and protect believers. Just as he has the authority to speak into our lives and help us see the truth, he has commissioned us to do the same for one another as the people of God. We cannot possibly hope to become more like him without understanding our authority to help sharpen one another in our walk with God (James 5:16-20; Prov. 27:17; Ecc. 4:9; 1 Thes. 5:11). Indeed, one of the most sanctifying tools in the hands of God is a community of believers dedicated to holding one another accountable as they follow Jesus. The Lord gives us his very own authority to correct and protect one another; one, to restore harmony within the body, and two, to make us more like Christ (Eph. 4:22-25).

Q: Explain how verses 24 and 25 are related in Ephesians 4.

Q: What are we supposed to tell our Christian neighbors? Why? (Eph. 4:25)

As mentioned before, we have a strong adversary who seeks to hinder our sanctification. At some point or another, we will start to stray, believe lies, or experience an extreme temptation of some sort. When we do, we need other believers to point us back to the path of Christlikeness. We must recognize that Jesus has given other believers the authority to ask hard questions and restore us back to health when we are struggling. They are not intruding or invading our privacy; they are acting in the authority the Lord gave them to keep the church protected from cancerous sin and rebellion. Jesus declares that when a few believers come together to help restore a wayward Christian, he is in full support of their efforts and offers his presence as validation (Matt.

18:20). While judging those outside the church is not our job, assessing the lives of those inside the church in order to keep them healthy and faithful is a clear call from God (1 Cor. 5:12-13). He delegates his authority to the church in order to handle matters of discipline, pruning, and correction, all to help his people become sanctified and victorious. The authority we have in preaching, prevailing, and protecting is remarkable, but we must remember it's delegated to us by God and God alone. We do not self-produce it, and we are not the source of it. It should give us great humility to know that any power or authority we have is granted from above (John 19:10-11; Rom 13:1). Thanks be to God who delegates the authority we need to be more like his Son!

Q: Share a time God used another believer to make you more like Christ in a certain situation.

Q: Summarize how our authority to preach, prevail, and protect makes us more like Jesus.



NEXT STEPS

+ *Connect the truths from God's Word to your daily life. Process how what you've learned this week will impact the way you live beyond today and into the future.*

Q: How does knowing God gave you authority to speak as his representative encourage you? How can you use that authority this week?

Q: What steps can you take this week to implement your authority over the enemy?

Q: Take time this week to ask another believer if they see any sin patterns in your life that need correcting or good growth patterns that they see in your life and encourage you in such patterns.



PRAY

+ Use these prayer points to connect your time in prayer to this week's focus.

- *God, thank you for giving me the authority I need to become more like Jesus. Please help me believe you have delegated this authority for my good.*
- *God, help me practically fight the enemy this week with your Word, with prayer, and with the armor you have provided me.*
- *God, thank you for the authority you've given to preach your gospel. Please give me opportunities this week to exercise that authority and proclaim the good news to a friend or family member.*
- *God, send another believer in my life who loves me enough to speak the truth to me when I need to hear it, sharpen me, and encourage me to stay faithful to you.*



COMMENTARY

+ Use these commentary resources to help explain the passages and facilitate discussion.

John 17:14 When Jesus says that he has given believers the Father's word, he is not referring to the Old Testament Scriptures, but to his own teachings. Broader than that, he is also referring to the whole of his life, which is the revelation of himself as the Word of God (John 1:1)

Matthew 4:1-11 Jesus responds to each temptation by quoting from Deuteronomy. He is purposefully connecting his experience to Israel's in the desert. In Deut. 8:2, Moses reminds the Israelites of God's testing through hunger and his miraculous provision of manna. Jesus is fulfilling, as our representative, the righteous response we should give the enemy, but often don't.

Matthew 4:9 True to his character as the father of deception, when Satan says "all these I will give you" to Jesus, he is lying. Though Satan claims that all this authority of the kingdoms and their glory has been delivered to him, and though in some sense Satan is the "ruler of this world" (John 12:31; John 5:19), the claim should not be accepted as fully true. Satan is "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44), and in the final analysis, all authority belongs to God (Rom. 13:1-4; Ps. 24:1; Dan. 4:17). Because of common grace even a fallen world still gives glory to God (Isa. 6:3). This is a temptation to break the first commandment (Ex. 20:3). Jesus replies that worship belongs to the Lord your God alone.

Matthew 4:11 As Jesus stayed firmly reliant on God's Word, the devil left him. Here Jesus is giving a powerful example on how to resist the enemy, and proving James 4:7 to be true—when we do this, Satan has no choice but to flee.

Luke 22:31-32 When Jesus states that "Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat," it's important to note that "you" is plural in these two cases. While he is speaking to Peter in one sense, his use of plural also indicates that all the disciples are in view beyond Peter as well. In other words, "Satan is seeking to shake you all violently, as one does wheat, to cause you to fall" (Job 1-2, Amos 9:9). However, when Jesus says "I have prayed ... that your faith may not fail," the word "your" here is singular, so Peter alone is being addressed. "Not fail" must mean "not fail completely." Peter's faith was later restored, which was not his own accomplishment but a result of the Holy Spirit's work in response to Jesus' prayer for him. This was a powerful example Jesus gave us to pray

for our brothers and sisters in Christ as they fight against the enemy.

Galatians 6:2 “Bearing one another’s burdens” is the supreme imitation of Christ, as he is our ultimate burden-bearer (Rom. 15:1–3). He bore the burden of our sins and the curse of the law (Gal. 1:4, 2:13). As we walk in these ways, we fulfill this standard of Christlikeness.

**All commentary resourcing for Lesson 2 was provided by the ESV Study Bible Commentary Notes and the NIV Compact Bible Commentary.*

