

Truth and Spirit Ministries

What the Devil Doesn't Want You to Know About

The Believers Authority

By Denise Bostic

For years after I received the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior I didn't know that as a believer he had given me the authority to preach the gospel, heal the sick, cast out demons and even to raise the dead. (*Mark 16:15-18, Matthew 10*) I didn't know that I belonged to a royal priesthood of all believers under a New and better Covenant. (*1 Peter 2:9*) I didn't know that I had been raised up with Christ and seated with him in the heavenly realms so that he could show the incomparable riches of his grace, power and glory through my life today. (*Ephesians 2:4-7*) Why? *Although these truths were in the New Testament, they weren't taught in my Church.* Instead of truth abounding ignorance, legalism and false teaching were abounding. You know what else? *The devil was glad!*

The devil is glad when we as believers are ignorant of who we are in Christ and what he has given us through the Cross. Why? It's because when we lack knowledge of these things this means that we will be ineffective for the cause of Christ and his Kingdom. He knows that if we don't know about the authority and power that's been given to us in Christ that we are no real threat to him or his kingdom of darkness. He knows that if we fall for the lies of false teachers that tell us that we have no real authority or power today that he and his demons can do their evil works of darkness without fear of being exposed and cast out. After all, we can't exercise authority that we don't know that we possess. (*Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 10:17-19*)

The devil doesn't want believers knowing about the authority that Christ has given us. In fact, he wants us to remain ignorant about many things that he has obtained for us through the Cross. His greatest goal for the Church is to lead as many saints as possible away from Christ and all of these glorious and powerful truths contained in the New Covenant. (*11 Corinthians 3:7-11, Hebrews 8:6*) Why? It's because he knows that the Gospel message that we preach contains great power from God and it means salvation for everyone who believes it. The message that we are spreading throughout the earth will translate souls out of his evil kingdom of darkness and into God's kingdom of light. (*Romans 1:16, Acts 26:17-18*) The message of the Cross that we proclaim enforces the victory of Christ and his humiliating defeat. When we exercise our authority in Christ we will deliver those that he has bound!

The Dangers of Ignorance

By now you may have noticed that I have used the term "ignorant" quite a bit. Some may be offended at the word but there's no need to be. It simply means "lacking knowledge" or "uninformed". The apostles Peter and Paul used this term frequently in their speaking

and letters to the Churches to teach the Church of the dangers of ignorance. (*Acts 3:17; 17:30; Ephesians 4:18; I Peter 1:14; 2:15; Romans 1:13; 10:3; 11:25; I Corinthians 10:1; 12:1; 14:38; II Corinthians 1:8; 2:11; I Thessalonians 4:13; Hebrews 5:2; II Peter 3:5, 8*) Why did the apostles use this word so much? It's because they knew that ignorance was *dangerous* to believers. They knew that the word of God taught that lack of knowledge could destroy God's people. (*Hosea 4:6*) They also knew that Satan will try to take advantage of our ignorance and use it against us if given the opportunity. (*II Corinthians 2:11, Ephesians 4:27, I Peter 5:8*)

By the same token however they knew that through the Cross of Christ they knew that we've been given great authority and power. They preached and prophesied that true believers overcome the devil by blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. (*Revelation 12:11*) Through the knowledge that Christ gave the Church in the first century, they were able to have a major impact on the world of their day. The Church was having such impact that it was literally turning the world upside down! What they knew and walked in shook the ruling empire of their day. They were such a threat to that empire that they were greatly persecuted for it. The devil doesn't want the Church today to know what they knew though. He doesn't want us to walk in that kind of authority and power because it will cause his kingdom to suffer greatly once again. This is why he wants as many believers as possible to be ignorant of the authority that has been given to them in Christ.

Although we may have been ignorant in times past, we don't have to remain ignorant. God wants us to be informed and knowledgeable of all of those things that he has given us through his Son, including the authority that he has given us to carry out his work in the earth today. He lets us know what we've been given through the New Testament scriptures and the Spirit. Through Christ and his word we can grow in grace and knowledge. We can know what the early Church knew and walk in great power and authority just as they did. His truth sets us free to be and do all that he has called us to do.

It's not a sin to be ignorant but it just might be to remain in ignorance after we have been given the knowledge of the truth. (*I Corinthians 14:38*) Any time that we come into the knowledge of any particular truth of God, he expects us to receive it and apply it to our lives. It's imperative then that every believer receive and understand the authority that Christ has given them. Without it we will be pitiful but with it we will be powerful foes of the kingdom of darkness.

Knowledge is Power

We combat ignorance in the Church with the knowledge of God's truth. The word of God teaches us to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and for great reason. (*II Peter 3:18*) What we don't know can hurt us and give Satan the opportunity to take advantage of us. God doesn't want us to suffer unnecessarily because of our own ignorance though. He has shown us in the word that it is his will for the Church "**to be built up, that we all come into the unity of the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ**". (*Ephesians 4:11-13*) In order to do that though, we must be as the noble Bereans and have a ready and willing mind to receive everything that the Lord has given us under the New Covenant. (*Acts 17:11*) We must not receive our teaching from men alone however

because to do so would put us in danger of being led astray. We need to ask God to teach us personally by his Spirit as well to reveal to us what he wants us to know about the believer's authority. The Spirit will help us to understand what Christ has given us and to implement it in our lives on a daily basis. (*I Corinthians 2:9-13, I John 2:27*)

At the same time that the Church is trying to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord we must realize that the devil fights against us to try to prevent this from happening. How does he try to impede the growth of the saints from maturing and conforming to Christ? He works his deceitful scheming through the cunning and craftiness of *false teachers* from the inside of the Church for it is here that he can seek to do the most damage. He knows that the Church expects the world to be deceived but not their local leaders or the traveling ministers that may be invited into their very midst. He infiltrates the Church with false teachers because it is there that he can bring his most subtle form of deception. (*II Corinthians 11:13-15, Ephesians 4:14, I Timothy 4:1, II Peter 2*) This is why the apostles and other leaders of the early Church taught believers to **“study to show themselves approved unto God”** and **“try the spirits to see whether they be of God.”** (*II Timothy 2:15, I John 4:1*)

What the Devil Doesn't Want You to Know

The devil doesn't want you and I to know about the authority that Christ has given us because he knows that with that authority comes great power. He knows that the Lord Jesus has been given a name above every name. He knows that he is now seated at the right hand of the Father and has been given all dominion and power in heaven and earth. He knows that there is no name under heaven by which men can be saved. He knows that Christ has already defeated him through the Cross. He knows that he and his demons have been stripped of power and that they are subject to him. (*Philippians 2:9, Romans 8:34, Matthew 28:18, Acts 4:12, Colossians 2:15*)

You know what else? *He knows we are in Christ and bear his name. He knows that we also are seated in heavenly places with him and that this denotes rulership. He knows that the Lord has given all believers within the Church his delegated authority and power to carry out his will in the earth. He knows that he and his demons are now subject to us as well in Jesus' mighty name.* (*Galatians 3:27, Ephesians 2:4-7, Matthew 10:7-8, 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-20, Luke 10:19*) This makes us a very serious threat to him and his kingdom. This is why he tries to hide the knowledge of the believer's authority in Christ from so many in the Church. He doesn't want us to use it against him and his kingdom. He doesn't want us ruling over him.

To fight against the reality that now exists due to the Cross of Christ, he sows tares among the wheat. He sows his tares to try to plant false teaching in the Church. He does this by sending false apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers and brethren to do his dirty work. How will you know them? Jesus said that we will know them by their fruit. Their fruit will not be good but bad. (*Matthew 7:15-20*) What they say will go contrary to the doctrines of Christ. (*I Timothy 4:1-6, II Peter 2:20-22, III John 9*) They are also the ones that teach that you have no authority as a believer in the Church that only the leadership does. They tell you that you should leave it to the “ministers” to preach the Gospel, that God no longer heals, that there are no demons today or that the gifts of the Spirit are no longer necessary for the

Church today. *Oh, and by the way, they'll mix just a little truth in there or twist the word of God to make it seem like its truth when it's not.* All of these things that I have just mentioned though are lies according to the Word of God.

What the Lord Wants You to Know

Many preachers today usually only focus on the fact that the Lord Jesus came to bring men eternal life but do you know that he also came to destroy the works of the devil? (*1 John 3:8*) He began his divine task by first exposing the devil for what he really is. What is he? Jesus said that he is a killer, liar, thief and destroyer. (*John 8:44, 10:10, Revelation 9:11*) Not only did Jesus come to expose the devil and destroy his works, he also came to bring the truth from God. The truth is the Lord has triumphed over him the devil and his entire kingdom of darkness through the Cross.

Now he and his demons know that they are defeated foes. However, the devil and his demons still seek to deceive as many saints as possible into believing that they still hold power over us or that they can still harm us in some way. There is no truth in this though. Jesus has given all believers authority over all the power of the enemy and he said that nothing they do can harm us. (*Luke 10:19*) This however is only one aspect of the authority that he has given you and me as believers.

So what authority has Christ given to all believers? The Word of God teaches us of the extent of our authority.

1. We have been given authority to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom of God in the earth, make disciples and baptize them. The Word of God declares:

Then Jesus came to them [his disciples, followers] and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." ~ Matthew 28:18-20

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ~ Mark 16:15

2. He has given us authority to walk in the power of the Spirit in the earth.

As we go and proclaim the Gospel to others we are also to witness or testify of his resurrection power. To enable us to do this the Lord has given us the power of his Spirit. Jesus told his disciples:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ~ Acts 1:8

3. The Lord has given us authority over Satan and his demons. Jesus said:

I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. ~ Luke 10:19

We have been given this authority because the Lord has already defeated Satan and his demons through his victory of the Cross. He not only defeated them but also *disarmed* them for the word of God declares that he:

...disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. ~ Colossians 2:15

This means that he can no longer harm us or use his weapons against us. The only thing that he has left in his arsenal to use against us is his deception and lies. When we are clothed with the whole armor of God however we can withstand his evil schemes. (*Ephesians 6:10-18*) Through the knowledge of God's word and the help of the Holy Spirit, we can not only learn of his devices but also discern when he is using them. (*1 Corinthians 12:10*) Then we can expose the works of the devil and use our God-given authority against him. (*Ephesians 5:11*)

When we as a Church truly have an in depth revelation of what the Cross of Christ entails, this means that the devil will no longer be able to deceive many in the Church with his deception and lies. He will no longer be able to do his dirty work undetected. *He knows that this will cause him to live day to day to eat the dust that the Lord crushed his head into when he defeated him on the Cross.*

He knows that if we really understand what Christ has given us and walk in it that we will be enforcing the Lord's victory on the Cross and his humiliating defeat. (*1 Corinthians 15:57, Colossians 2:13-15*) He knows that when Christ was given all authority in heaven and earth by the Father that he then turned around and gave his delegated authority to the Church. (*Matthew 28:18-20*) He knows that there's power in the blood of Jesus. In fact, they believe in God and tremble in fear of him. (*James 2:19*) He knows that God never lies and that he will always keep his word. He knows that if we walk in the authority and power that the Lord has given us that we too will expose and destroy his works of darkness. (*Ephesians 5:11*) This is why he works so diligently to keep the truth hidden from believers through false teaching. *He does not want you and me to be formidable foes to his kingdom.*

But we can be. God has given us everything through the Cross of Christ to accomplish the Great Commission of spreading the Gospel throughout the earth today. Along with the authority that the Lord has given us to preach his Gospel, he has also given us authority and power over that which stands opposed to our accomplishing this great work. When we have an understanding of our believer's authority we will not fear the devil or his cohorts because we will know that because we are in Christ, they are subject to us in his name. (*Luke 10:19*) Our perfect love and trust in God will cast out all fear. (*1 John 4:18*)

4. The Lord has not only given us authority to preach the Gospel, authority over the devil and his demons but also over all manner of sicknesses and diseases as well.

Before the Lord ascended into heaven he told his disciples:

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they 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, emphasis mine them at all;

Other scriptures that teach of the believer's authority to heal every sickness and disease are *Matthew 10:1, Luke 9:1-2 and Luke 10:1*

There are many denominations today that are not preaching all of the Cross of Christ to believers. (Thank God for those that are preaching and teaching all of these powerful truths though.) Some teach believers that only the leaders of the Church have been given authority to heal the sick. (*James 5:14-15*) The truth is however; the Lord has given all believers the power to heal the sick. The Lord has given the authority to heal to the entire Church, not just a select few. (*Mark 16:18*) The Lord wants as many laborers as possible to effectively proclaim the Gospel throughout the earth and bring many more souls into the Kingdom. (*Luke 10:1-2*) In order to be effective we must be able to walk in the demonstration of the Spirit's power. (*1 Corinthians 2:1-5*)

Signs Follow Believers Who Proclaim the Gospel

According to Jesus' very own words whenever any disciple (believer) is sent by him to proclaim the message of the Gospel, he will work with them and confirm his word with signs following. Again Jesus told his followers:

*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. **And these signs will accompany those who believe:** In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they 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.*

*After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. **Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.***

Although I have already taught this on our website several times, I want to reiterate the definition of the word "signs". Joseph Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament defines signs as *being miracles and wonders by which God authenticates the men sent by him, or by which men prove that the cause they are pleading is God's*. The truth is, when God sends any believer to proclaim the message of the Cross, he will fully back that message with his power. According to the Word of God he proves that the message of his Son is authentic not only by performing signs, wonders and miracles through his people but also through the gifts of the Holy Spirit that he demonstrates through

them as well. (*Hebrews 2:4 NIV*) In this we learn one of the greatest reasons for Christ giving the believer authority and that is to prove the authenticity of the Gospel message.

Walking in our Authority Helps to Draw People to Christ

The New Testament scriptures teach us in many places that when Jesus, the apostles and other believers walked in their God-given authority by casting out devils, healing the sick or performing miracles that this caused people to pay close attention to the message of the Gospel that they proclaimed. A good example of this is recorded for us in the Book of Acts. The time period was after a great persecution broke out against the Church after Stephen was stoned. We find the whole story recorded in Acts 7 and 8.

Scripture teaches us that during this time all the believers but the apostles in Jerusalem were scattered to other regions. Those believers that were scattered preached the word wherever they went. (*Acts 8:4*) One such believer named Philip went down to a city called Samaria to preach Christ. Here's the story:

Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. *For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city... But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ~ Acts 8:4-8, 12*

What caused them to believe? It was not only the message that he preached but the signs, wonders and miracles that God performed through Philip. Likewise, when Paul went into Ephesus to preach the Gospel, God performed many extraordinary miracles through him such as healing the sick and casting out devils. As a result of all that happened there many believed and openly confessed their evil deeds and those that practiced sorcery burned their scrolls publicly. (*Acts 19:11-20*) When we preach Christ to others God will release his powerful signs, wonders and miracles through us to authenticate the Gospel message.

The Devil Knows Who Has Authority and Who Doesn't

An interesting but very important side note is that when Paul was in Ephesus, some Jews tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus that Paul preached. However, they were attacked by an evil spirit. Why? It was because they weren't believers in Christ. They hadn't been given the AUTHORITY by Christ to cast out demons. Let's read the story:

Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out."¹⁴ Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.¹⁵ One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?"¹⁶ Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. ~ Acts 19:13-16

Take special note here of what the evil spirit told the “seven sons of Sceva”. **“Jesus I know and Paul I know but who are you?”** This teaches us that the devil and his demons only recognize and respond to the authority that has been given to believers in Christ. How do they know who is a believer and who isn't? Only believers have been given the seal of Spirit of God in their foreheads. (*Ephesians 1:13-14*)

5. The Lord has given believers the authority to raise the dead and cleanse lepers. He told those believers that he sent out this:

As you go, proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give. ~ Matthew 10:7-8

Since the Cross of Christ it has been documented that many people have been raised from the dead. The writers of the Gospels were eyewitnesses of those that Jesus raised from the dead before his death and resurrection and those resurrected from the dead after his resurrection as well. (*Matthew 27:51-53*) It was also recorded that the apostles raise people from the dead after the resurrection too. (*Matthew 9:18-26, Luke 7:11-17, Acts 9:36-42, Acts 20:7-12*) In times past and even today there have been many eyewitness accounts of people being raised from the dead. Jesus is truly the same yesterday, today and forever. The raising of the dead throughout the dispensation of the New Testament serves as proof that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. (*John 11:25-44*) Next I will be teaching more about the extent of the believer's authority and how to use it properly.

Part II coming soon