

◇ A WORD IN SEASON ◇

HEAVEN'S AUTHORITY

Through the Power of Love, Forgiveness and Joy!

By Doug Stringer

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In Matthew 28:18 Jesus said, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth." This statement was the basis by which He commissioned His followers into the world, equipping us with His authority. But Jesus' desire is also to give us the power of that authority.

1 Corinthians 4:20 tells us the kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power. Representing and demonstrating the kingdom of God requires more than our words. It requires a demonstration of the very presence, power, and authority of God.

Jesus not only gave his disciples authority, but the power to wield that authority as well. Luke 9: 1-2 says, "And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing." When the kingdom of God is being preached and is present in our midst, God moves in powerful ways! His power and authority lives in us and is released through us to save the lost and bring healing to those in need.

◇ The River of God

In Revelation 22, we see a picture of the river of God, which flows from the throne of God and brings healing wherever it goes. This river is the power and presence of Jesus that flows from the people of God, just as

it tells us in John 7:38. "Whoever believes in me...rivers of living water will flow from within them."

This is the river that should flow whenever we share the Good News of the Kingdom. In the same passage of Scripture in Luke 9, Jesus told his disciples to preach the Gospel and bring healing everywhere. When we preach the Gospel, there should be healing everywhere we go, moving in us and through us, like a river of living water. Walking in the authority of Jesus, we are given power to cure the sick, save the lost, and preach the Good News. It is His presence flowing in us and through us that accomplishes these things.

When you live a life that attracts the presence of God, you walk in the power and authority of Jesus.

The presence and power of God is not merely in our words. It is a lifestyle that attracts His presence. When you live a life that attracts the presence of God, you walk in the power and authority of Jesus. This means when you are in the supermarket, you are the temple of the Holy Spirit, carrying His presence. When you go to your job, or to school, or around the community, you are carrying the river of God's presence. It is not merely your words that will draw others to Jesus, but the power and authority of God that causes even those who don't know you to be curious about who you are and what you

believe.

To walk in the demonstration of the power of God and the gifts of His spirit, I believe there are three "power gifts" that will help you to release the river of God around you.

1. The Power of Love

First Corinthians 13 tells us that if someone has faith that can move mountains, prophesies, speaks in tongues, gives all they have to the poor, but lacks love, they are without true power or impact. Love is the most powerful force in the world. The ability to love others, especially those who are our enemies, can give someone more influence

and impact in the lives of those around them than any amount of fame or money could ever do.

Many years ago, there was a man who despised me. He was very anti-Christian and was determined to expose me as some kind of hypocrite. He would sometimes show up at meetings I was speaking at, and would heckle me or do whatever he could to interrupt me.

Once, I was on a local Christian radio show and this man called in to the show. I knew it was him, despite the fact that he used another name. He began to speak against me and ridicule

Christians. “You are all just hypocrites. You don’t love—you hate.” In my reply, I asked him if he was who I thought he was, and he admitted he was. I then told him that I knew he was HIV positive and dying of AIDS. I told him that I knew that the month before he had been unable to pay his rent and his electric bill. I asked him where his friends were during that time. I then told him that it was our ministry that had anonymously paid his bills the previous month with a collection taken up by our staff. He was, needless to say, shocked to hear this.

This act of love opened the heart of a man who had been bitter and angry towards God and provided us with the opportunity to share the gospel with him. Months later, one of our volunteers was able to be with him the night before he died. This precious soul surrendered his heart to Jesus and now sits in the presence of the Lord.

2. The Power of Forgiveness

In Matthew 16:19, there is a scripture we are all probably familiar with. Many of us like to pray this prayer when we talk about the authority God gives us. “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

There are people all around us bound in their sin. They are bound up in bitterness, with wounds in their heart and spirit. But Jesus came to free us from our chains and mend our broken hearts. And that same power and authority has been given to us to set the captives free. However, if we are walking in unforgiveness ourselves, with unresolved wounds in our hearts and spirits, how can we release the power of forgiveness to others?

Releasing forgiveness frees others to experience the heart of God. God has not counted our sins against us (2 Corinthians 5:19); neither should we hold others in bondage when they have wronged us. By forgiving others, we become partners with God in the ministry of reconciliation.

3. The Power of Joy

The Bible says that the joy of the Lord is strength to us (Nehemiah 8:10) and a merry heart is good medicine (Proverbs 17:22). We need the power of joy, both for ourselves and to carry to those around us.

The number of people in our society battling depression and hopelessness seems to be higher than ever before. We need an infusion of joy to bring healing

Many of us need a reminder of the joy we first had in receiving the Good News. The joy of salvation is a joy like no other. As we tap into that joy fresh each day, we are ready to share the Good News of God’s Kingdom with others.

and strength. That infusion is brought by the river of God flowing in us and through us!

Many of us need a reminder of the joy we first had in receiving the Good News. The joy of salvation is a joy like no other. As we tap into that joy fresh each day, we are ready to share the Good News of God’s Kingdom with others. As it says in Romans 14:17, the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!

◇ Releasing the River of Power

Beloved brothers and sisters, you are a river of God’s love, forgiveness, and joy which bring healing to the nations. Draw from the Well that never runs

dry because it comes from the source that never ceases to flow; The River of God that comes from His throne of Grace and Mercy Seat. Drink from His river and allow His living waters to bubble up on the inside of you. Share the goodness of His love, His forgiveness, and His joy with those around you and marvel as He sets captives free from the chains that bind them. Release the river of power that brings healing and harvest everywhere it flows...in and through you!



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