

It's All About Authority

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 02 June 2013

Preacher: Don Coleman

[0:00] I invite you this morning to open your Bibles to our text and it is Luke chapter 7.

! Luke chapter 7 and I'm going to read verses 1 through 10. That's our text for this morning. Luke 7 verses 1 through 10.

So you follow along in your Bibles as I read aloud from mine. Now when he concluded all these sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum.

And a certain centurion's servant who was dear to him was sick and ready to die. So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to him, pleading with him to come and heal his servant.

And when they came to Jesus, they begged him earnestly, saying that the one for whom he should do this was deserving. For he loves our nation and has built us a synagogue.

[1:11] Then Jesus went with them. And when he was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying to him, Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof.

Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to you. But say the word and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me.

And I say to one, go, and he goes. And to another, come, and he comes. And to my servant, do this, and he does it. When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, turned around, and said to the crowd that followed him, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel.

And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick.

Interesting story. Heard about a couple of guys who were riding together in a car down the highway. And one of them said to the other guy, he said, did you see that billboard back there? It was amazing. The neon orange on that billboard was so bright it nearly blinded me. To which the other guy responded, said, that wasn't neon orange.

[2:27] That was fire engine red. Anybody could tell that. And so the guy said, well, anyway, the Helvetica font was an interesting choice for the sign.

To which the other guy said, well, that wasn't Helvetica. That was Calabri light. Anybody could tell that. After about six minutes or so of silence, the one guy said to the other, he said, you know, what did that sign say anyway?

The other fellow said, I don't know. I forgot to read it. You see, sometimes we look at things and we get so enamored by some of the more insignificant features or interesting features of it that we miss the whole point, the whole significance of it.

And we do that quite often with God's word. In fact, if you're not careful, you'll do that with this passage that we're looking at here this morning. Now, I just read it. So you tell me, what was it about this story that stands out in your mind?

Well, Jesus healed someone, right? Well, he did. Though I want to be very careful when I say this, but that might not be the most profound part of the story.

[3:39] I mean, Jesus did a lot of healing during his ministry on this earth, right? Well, yeah, he did. All right, so what else about the story kind of stands out in our mind? Well, we could say, yeah, not only did he heal someone, but he healed this servant of a Roman centurion without going to him, seeing him, touching him, and according to Scripture, apparently, without even saying anything.

Even though the centurion said, say a word. We don't have any record that Jesus even said a word. Like sometimes he would say, rise up and take your bed and walk, or be healed, or whatever the words.

He didn't even say a word, and yet this servant was healed. Pretty profound, right? The centurion said, I'm not worthy that you should enter under my roof. Just say the word, and my servant will be healed.

And verse 10 says, and those who were sent returning to the house, what did they find? They found the servant well who had been sick. In fact, Matthew even adds this in his account.

He says, and his servant was healed that same hour. Pretty incredible, right? And yet, if that's all you see out of this story, then you're missing the most important part.

[4:55] Now, I've preached from this text before, so what I'm going to say this morning may not be new. Maybe you've forgotten it. But I guarantee you that most of us, when we read this passage, we think about the healing and the miraculous nature of healing, and even the unusual way in which Jesus healed this man, and we see very little else.

Let's not miss the real point. Let me tell you what it is. What this story is all about, and I could sum it up with one word. Authority. Authority. Is that what you got from this text when I read it a moment ago?

That this passage, the underlying truth that comes out and flourishes and really speaks to our heart of hearts, did you get that from this passage, that it's authority?

That the lesson is authority. In the general picture, or generally speaking, I'm talking about the sovereign authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. And Luke, of course, has been revealing that from the very beginning of his gospel account.

But in a more specific sense, this is about the spiritual authority of the born-again believer. That's what we need to see in this story.

[6:16] Let me sum it up with a few more words, a few more than one. One of the most profound, most important issues that you and I need to learn in the Christian life, and therefore the most important discovery that we shall ever make in the course of our own spiritual maturity is this principle of authority that's taught, put on display for us right here in this passage.

The principle of authority. When it comes to the victorious Christian life, dear people, it is all about authority. We struggle with temptation, and we often lose those battles because we have not submitted ourselves to the principle of authority.

We suffer emotionally and financially when we make poor decisions with our money, and it's because we have not submitted ourselves to the principle of authority.

We have problems at the workplace. We have problems even at play, entertainment. We have problems at home. We have problems in our churches because we are either ignorant of, or more likely, we are rebellious toward God's ordained principle of authority.

And we see it right here in this passage. And I tell you that the devil does not want us to learn this. He does not want us, first of all, to discover this principle. He does not want us to learn it and apply it and live it out.

[7:59] And why is that? Because he knows that his job against us, his battle against us, is made much easier when we do not submit ourselves and live according to the principle of authority.

Now, what is meant by the word authority? Let me give you a technical definition. Authority is a legal standing that is backed up by the authority or power of the one who grants that legal standing. Now, that's a pretty simple definition, though a technical definition. Now, we need to understand that God is the one who grants the legal standing. No matter what the authority is, it is God, ultimately, that grants the legal standing.

God is the one who has the authority, all authority, to begin with. And then we are the ones to whom God has granted authority, a legal standing of authority.

And that was God's plan from the very beginning. The Bible tells us way back there in Genesis chapter 1 and verse 26 that when God made man, man was to have dominion or authority or rule over the entire planet.

[9:18] That was God's plan at the beginning. And Adam and Eve were to be the king and queen, as it were, of all of creation. But you know the story. Adam and Eve fell through sin.

They fell from God's ordained thrones. The thrones he had given them, placed them upon. They fell through sin. And when they did, we were all affected.

Mankind lost everything they were to have dominion over, including themselves. And so sin has dethroned us. Sin has robbed us of our rightful crown, original crown.

Sin has robbed us of our authority, not only of ourselves, but over anything else we are to have authority over. And Adam's sin did that way back there in the Garden of Eden.

Now how is that regained? Well, it's regained through the Lord Jesus Christ. It's regained through salvation, through the born-again experience. And yet, I must be quick to add that even after

salvation, even after we're born again, we can and often do choose to live without authority in our lives.

[10:27] Without authority, without spiritual power. And so we need to learn this text, learn from this text, the principle of authority. And that principle could be simply stated in these terms.

You might want to jot this down. Three words. Authority equals submission. Not what you were expecting, but it's true.

We're going to learn that from this text. Authority equals submission. Or to put it this way, as born-again children of God. You and I are to be, to live under authority.

You and I are to live under authority. All the authorities that God has placed over us. We're to live under authority. And so that you and I can live having authority.

That is, the authority that God has, intends for us, each of us, to have. You understand? Authority equals submission.

[11:38] You and I are to live under authority so that we can have authority. We can live having authority. That is the lesson that we can learn from this particular passage, this story in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This centurion said to Jesus, what? He said, in so many words, the reason I have authority is because I am under authority. That's the lesson. That's the lesson.

So let's look at the text and see how Scripture teaches this principle of authority. Number one, we need to consider the source of authority.

The source of authority, spiritual or otherwise. I'm talking about any and all authority in whatever the context may be. The source of authority. The source of authority. And so from where does authority come?

Well, simply put, authority, the source of all authority, spiritual or otherwise, is God. It's God. Whether you recognize that or not, and most do not.

[12:36] Certainly those in the unbelieving world do not recognize that. And I'm saying that even the source of authority for unbelievers is ultimately God. The source of authority is God.

Now, let's just walk through this story very quickly. And I've already read it. But now let's just kind of hit some of the bullet points of the story. Here is a Roman centurion.

Very important guy. He was an army officer, of course. Centurion is an officer. And because of his name, centurion, that means that he was the leader of 100 soldiers.

And we know from history that the centurion was very important to the Roman army, to the Roman empire. They even referred to the centurion as the backbone of the Roman military machine.

But this particular centurion was somewhat unique from other centurions that we might read about in and out of the Bible. This particular centurion was a good man.

[13:39] A good man, a kind man, a loving man, a compassionate man. And he was kind and compassionate toward God's people, the Jews, which was a very unusual thing for any Roman, much less a centurion guard or Roman.

And so he had a love for the Jewish people, had done some very important things for them, built a synagogue for them. And he was a godly man. We understand that from the story.

In fact, Jesus said what of this centurion? He said, in effect, that this centurion had a greater faith than anyone he had ever run across. Pretty amazing thing for Jesus to say about a Roman centurion.

And this Roman centurion, according to the story, had a servant. Probably had many servants, but there was one particular servant that was sick. And because he loved this servant, and because he had heard about Jesus, he'd heard about him, and because, apparently, he had a great faith in Jesus, he sent some of his Jewish friends to go seek out Jesus, and then to urge him to come to his house and heal his servant.

And so Jesus, apparently, was willing to do so. And as Jesus was coming, this centurion had a second thought, didn't he? He thought better of it in his own spirit, and he thought that, you know, Jesus should not come under the roof of my house, because my house is unworthy.

[15:06] And so he sent another messenger to find Jesus, and the message was, you tell Jesus that he doesn't even have to come to my house, because I'm unworthy. All he has to do is just speak the word.

Just speak the word, and I know my servant will be healed. That's what the centurion was saying. All right, so, clearly, what a great faith this man had.

But now, understand that his great faith was not some blind faith. His faith was founded upon a belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, of course.

But also, his faith was founded upon the principle of authority. That's what we discover in this text. Notice the reason for saying what he said.

Look at verse 7. Say the word, he said. Just say the word, and my servant will be healed. I have great confidence in that, great faith in that. For, and here's his reasoning, for I also am a man placed under authority.

[16 : 15] That was kind of an interesting reason for believing that all Jesus had to do was say the word, and his servant would be healed. But this was the substance of his faith.

And Jesus called it a great faith, a greater faith than he had seen in anywhere else in Israel. The substance of his faith was articulated this way, for I also am a man under, placed under authority. And that is, he was saying, I know how you operate, Jesus. I know how you're able to do the things that you do, the miraculous things that you do. And it's not just because you're God. That's not what he was saying.

I'm not sure he believed that at that point. But I know how you're able to do these great things, because I know how you operate. And I know this, because I, in a sense, operate the same way. I, too, am a man under authority. You, Jesus, are under authority. That's what he was saying.

[17 : 17] Jesus healed because he was always subject to God the Father. Now, they were equal, co-equal in the Godhead, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I'm not saying that God, Jesus has God as some lesser God. But he had subjected himself, submitted himself, and therefore, everything he was able to do on this planet during his ministry, he was able to do because he was in subjection to God the Father.

Even his accomplishment of your salvation was based upon his submission. Even his power over Satan, ultimate power over Satan, was accomplished through his submission to God the Father. Jesus healed. Jesus received all of his authority from the Father. Jesus himself said in Matthew 28, 18, All authority is given to me in heaven and in earth.

All right, so from where does authority come? From where does my authority come? Let me just ask myself. From where does my authority as a Christian come from?

[18 : 27] As a husband. As a father. As a pastor. From where does my authority come? I receive my authority from God.

We receive our authority from God. Romans 13 and verse 1. There is no authority except from God. And those that exist have been ordained by God.

That's pretty clear. I don't know how you could argue with that. And the application of that passage is far-reaching. Including civil authority. That was the context in which Romans 13, 1 was written. But it reaches further than that. It reaches to civil authority. Authority in life. Spiritual authority. Authority in the home. Authority at work. Authority at church. Whatever the context. It's far-reaching. All authority. There is no authority except from God.

[19 : 25] The source of authority. Let's also consider a second feature of authority. The principle of authority. And this is key.

Now we've already been speaking somewhat of this. I've already identified it. But let's expand upon this. And that is not only the source of authority. But the secret of authority.

The secret of authority. Look closely at verse 8. For I also am a man placed under authority. Now pay attention to that. Under authority. I'm a man placed under authority.

And then he says having soldiers under me. There's the secret of authority. Do you see what he's saying?

The only way this Roman centurion could have any authority whatsoever over those 100 soldiers. Was to be.

[20 : 25] To keep himself under the authority above him. The Roman military. Kind of. Levels of authority above him.

All the way up to season. The only way he could continue to be in authority. And to say to a soldier go. And he goes. And come. And he comes. And do this. And he does this.

The only way he could continue to have that authority. Over those under him. Was for this centurion. To remain in submission to the authorities. Above him.

That's what he's saying. I see that in you Jesus. And that's how it operates in me. And if it operates that way. With a Roman centurion. Then that operates.

It operates the same way for us. Because this is God's order. This is God ordained. Remember the source of authority is God. The secret of it is submission.

[21:22] Submission to authority. The moment. The centurion rebels. Against the authority over him. The Roman government. At that very moment.

He ceases to have any authority whatsoever. Over those under him. That's the secret of authority. And what is it in simple terms? To be over. You must. Be under.

To be over. You must be under. Or submission. Is the secret of authority. Now let's make an application. Why is it that so many believers. Have seemingly no authority.

In their lives spiritually. When we are to have. Authority. Spiritually. Why is it that many believers. Seemingly have no authority over sin. Why is it that so many believers.

Seemingly have no authority. Over the flesh. And the flesh. Fleshly compulsions. And cravings. And no authority. To put this flesh. In subjection.

[22:21] In subjection. Why is it that. Seemingly. Many believers. Have no authority. Over discouragement. Or disillusionment. Or depression.

Or many other maladies. Of life. Why is it that the believers. Above all other people. Seemingly have no authority. Over these things. No authority over fears. And anxieties.

And no authority. Over Satan. And his oppression. Why is it that many believers. Seemingly. Have no authority. Over their lives. Virtually. Why is it that so many believers.

Have little or no authority. Over the people. And the things. They should have. Authority over. It is simple. It is because. Of rebellion.

Against God's principle. Of authority. They want to be over. But are unwilling. To be under. It's just plain and simple. Not under God. And the authority.

[23:15] Of his word. Not under. Those authorities. God has ordained. Us to be under. The principle. Of authority. The source of authority.

Then is. Sovereignty. It's the sovereign. It's a sovereign God. No authority. Exists. Unless God gives it. The secret.

To authority. Is. Submission. You cannot. Be over. Unless you're willing. To be. Under.

And the result of it. Is third. The secret. Excuse me. The strength. Of authority. The strength. Of authority. See.

See how this unfolds. Right here. Before our very eyes. In verse eight. For I also am a man. Placed under authority. Having soldiers. Under me. The centurion said.

[24:11] And then what he says. This. He says. I say. Go. And he goes. I say.

Come. And he comes. I say. Do this. And he. Does it. He does it. The strength.

Of authority. There are. Believers today. Who. Are so. Morally. Weak. Especially.

In. In. This culture. So. Morally. Weak. And there are. Believers. Today. Who.

Are. Spiritually. Anemic. Weak. No. No. Power. Spiritually. Or. Very little. Pushovers.

[25:10] When it comes to. Temptation. There are so many believers today. Who are so. Biblically. Illiterate. Especially.

In our culture. No. Spiritual strength. No. Authority. Where they are supposed to have authority. In their own. Over their own lives. Their own flesh.

As well as all other authorities. That God has placed under them. No influence. In. This world. For righteousness. But this centurion.

On the other hand. He said. I have a great strength. Didn't he? I have a great strength. I say. Do this. And they do it. There are some.

Fathers. Perhaps. Right here. In this room. Who. Disregard. And disobey. God's word. The teachings.

[26:07] Of his word. They're not. Men of. Integrity. Not at work. Not in the home. Not even in their own. Personal lives.

Especially their. Private lives. And they're wondering. Why their children. Do not respect them. And do not honor them.

And do not obey them. They're wondering. Why their wives. Do not lovingly. Follow their leadership. And respect them. And they're wondering.

Why their family. Seems always to be. Under the attack. Of Satan. I mean. Stuff just continues. To happen. And they're wondering. Why they cannot.

Seem to control. And have victory. Over their lusts. and there are some mothers and wives who show little respect for their husbands, and they dishonor their husbands before their women friends, and maybe even before their own children, and they wonder why they do not have authority in the home and why things are so out of control in the home.

[27 : 20] Their children are out of control, and they wonder about that, and they wonder why their children are so rebellious and why they can't seem to get a handle on their own spiritual lives.

They wonder about that. And there are some young people who refuse to obey their parents, refuse to honor and respect their parents.

They refuse to submit to other authorities in their lives, be it the school teacher, be it the school teacher, police officers, other civil authorities, the boss at work.

And then they wonder why they have trouble living a moral life. why they are always, you know, minds riddled with impure and filthy thoughts and desires, and they wonder why God is not answering their prayers.

The scenarios are endless. But the answer is the same. You cannot be over so long as you are unwilling to be under.

[28 : 38] With God, it's all about authority. Believers want authority over sin and temptation, don't you? Huh? I hope you do.

You want authority over sin and temptation? Power over sin and temptation? Something that comes at you every single moment of your life, do you want to have authority over those things?

Do you want authority over your spiritual battle against Satan and the forces of darkness?

Believers want authority to be bold witnesses of their faith. We're so weak in that. We want to have authority there. And believers want authority over difficult circumstances.

And we face them, don't we? All of us do. We want to have kind of authority over them, victory over those things. And believers want authority as parents. And believing husbands want authority to be the spiritual leaders of their home.

[29 : 45] And believers want authority to have authority as bosses and supervisors and leaders. But you cannot be over unless you're willing to be under.

That's the lesson of this short little story in the Gospel of Luke. Christian life is all about authority. And authority equals what? Submission.