

## 82 – Created for Authority

John 14: 27-31

God is a generous God. He wants to share His authority, but only with a certain kind of person: His Son, and those who are like His Son. If He were to give His authority to anyone else they would use it for things that are not His will, which means He would be assisting them to do things that are harmful. And, of course, He can never do that because He is completely good. To deviate from His will would mean that something outside His plan, outside His character, outside His goodness was being included. And that would contaminate it. If God were to answer a prayer that is misguided, or empower a person who is pursuing their own fleshly desires, or confirm a teaching that is distorted, He would be helping that person do something harmful to themselves or to someone else. And His goodness does not allow Him to do that. The ultimate proof of this is His own Son. He gave Him great authority *because* He loved the Father and did “exactly as the Father commanded” Him. (v31).

During that final evening, as He prepared His disciples for His departure, Jesus made enormous promises. He said His disciples would do greater miracles than He had done (Jn 14:12), and though I still find that hard to understand, that promise certainly means that God is willing to do amazing things through us. He said the Holy Spirit would come and dwell inside us and teach us “all things” (Jn 14:26). He said we would have the same kind of peace in the midst of trials that He had (Jn 14:27). He said we would “bear much fruit” (Jn 15:8), meaning we will help a lot of people find Him. He said we would be able to ask the Father for anything, and He would give it to us (Jn 16:24). He said the Father would love us and would invite us to bring our requests directly to Him (Jn 16:26, 27), and He would answer us and fill us with joy (Jn 16:24).

Those are fabulous promises! But let’s be honest, we don’t often see that kind of authority being expressed. In fact, we may only know a few people who actually fit that description. The promises themselves sound wonderful, but in practice something seems to be hindering them. There are, indeed, enough examples of God’s power in people’s lives today to prove that the promises are valid. So the problem isn’t with the promises or the God who gave them. It must lie with those of us who seldom or never see such promises being answered. There must be a missing element. But what is it? Thankfully all we have to do to find the answer is to listen carefully to what Jesus said that evening, and the answer becomes obvious: To do what Jesus did, we need a heart like Jesus had. Today, let’s listen to His heart.

**Don’t be afraid** (Jn 14:27-31)

• DBS (Sun-Sat)

### Created for authority

God is a very generous God. No sooner had He created the first humans than He gave them authority over the world He had made. Listen:

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ God made man in His own image, in the image of God He made him; male and female he created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth’ (Ge 1:26-28).

David celebrated God’s generosity in Psalm 8. He marveled over God’s original purpose for humans. He said, “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have ordained; what is man that You take thought of him and the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God (Elohim), and You crowned him with glory and majesty! You made him rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet...” (Ps 8:3-6).

As we all know, that original purpose, God’s plan to give great authority to humans, was lost; but we need to remember why it was lost. Humans forfeited the right to use God’s authority because they refused to submit to His will. Yet over the course of history, whenever individuals did submit again to His will, at least some measure of that authority was restored. The Bible records numerous examples of leaders and prophets who were given remarkable powers. Some would prophesy, and what they spoke came to pass. Some would speak a command, and a miracle would take place. Their heartfelt submission to God allowed Him to give them some of the authority He originally intended for humans.

### The perfect man

Jesus is the divine Son of God. He existed in heaven before coming to earth, but when He became a man He laid aside the privileges and glory that were His in heaven (Php 2:5-7). Now, a person can’t change their spirit. We are spirit, so Jesus couldn’t leave His divine spirit in heaven. It was His spirit that came to earth and became miraculously conceived in Mary. It was His spirit that was joined to human flesh. The man, Jesus, became body, soul, and spirit, just as you and I are body, soul, and spirit; only in His case, His spirit is divine and eternal while yours and mine began when we were conceived in our mother’s womb.



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To become our sacrifice, Jesus had to become a man and be tempted "...in all things as we are..." (He 4:15). For that to happen, Jesus couldn't rid Himself of His divine knowledge and power, those elements belong to His spirit, they come with being who He is; but to become one of us He had to refuse to draw on His divine powers. Which He did, completely. So when we watch Jesus minister, we are watching a totally submitted human being exercise the authority that God is willing to give to human beings who are totally submitted to Him. Jesus shows us what is possible. He shows us what you and I could do if we were as completely submitted as He was.

That level of authority is so amazing that our natural response is to say, "Why, that's ridiculous. I could never do the kind of wonders Jesus did!" You would think we were presuming way too much, until we hear Jesus say something like this, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater [works] than these he will do because I go to the Father" (Jn 14:12).

Or this,

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (Jn 15:10).

Or this,

"In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you" (Jn 16:23).

Notice: Jesus speaks of us asking the Father for something in *Jesus' name*. To do something in someone else's name means you are their servant. You do or say something because that person told you to do or say it. They sent you on a mission as their representative. So to appear before the Father and ask Him for something "in Jesus' name" means we are asking Him to help us carry out an assignment Jesus gave us. It indicates that we are submitted to the Son, who's submitted to the Father, so we're asking for something that's in God's perfect will. When we do that, when we come before the Father with a heart like Jesus' heart, then the Father can give us what we're asking for, and work through us, as powerfully as He worked through Jesus. A love for God, combined with a submitted attitude, combined with an aggressive attempt to discover His will and obey it, is what it means to be Jesus' disciple. And it was to His disciples, and them only, that all these promises were made.

### Testing the promises

Many people have tested these promises only to have them fail. They prayed a prayer and then said the words "in Jesus' name" and waited to see what would happen. But nothing did. The danger in that is that they may conclude that these promises don't work. They might think to themselves, "Those promises sound good but nothing happens when you try to use one." But the problem is these promises only work for certain people; they weren't intended for everyone. They are a gift from God to those who really love Him. They provide the authority they'll need to carry out *His will*.

### Receiving the promises

To receive these promises, a person does not have to be perfect or sinless. They are not a reward for good behavior. God's criteria is really quite simple: He gives His authority to people He can trust, in other words, to people who are becoming like Jesus. People with a heart like that not only believe what the Bible says about Jesus, they actively seek a relationship with Him. They read the Bible regularly and try to let God speak to them through what they are reading. They pray brief prayers throughout the day, as different situations arise. They ask for guidance and help, and then watch to see how God will answer their prayer. They are Jesus' followers, people who are trying to obey Him and become like Him. And it is to people like that, the Father gives great authority.

In a letter John wrote years later, he expressed this truth beautifully. Listen:

"This is the confidence that we have before Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us [in] whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him" (1Jn 5:14, 15).

Let's check our heart to see that it has the right attitudes, and then let's lay hold of those promises and step out in the authority God wants to give us!

### Questions

1. What's the most amazing miracle you have ever seen? What happened? How did it affect you?
2. Have you ever asked God for something, but He didn't give it to you, and now you're grateful He didn't? If it's not too embarrassing, tell us about it.
3. Think of a recent situation in which you needed God's help to do what He asked you to do. Did you pray? Did He answer? What happened?