

The Authority of the Believer – Part 3 In the Name of Jesus Christ

Last week I started a series on the **Authority of the Believer**. Today we will be focusing on the meaning of the phrase *'in the name of Jesus Christ'* and what bearing it has on divine **authority**. We will be examining the importance of the Lord's 'name' and why (and how) the power of the Holy Spirit is released by the **authority** invested in the Name. The apostle Paul introduces his first letter to the church at Corinth by acknowledging them as the Father's elect children who have the right to call upon the name of Jesus Christ: ***"To the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints along with all who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place. Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"*** (1 Corinthians 1:2).

So what does the phrase *'in the name of Jesus Christ'* really mean? Why is it necessary for us to use the **name** of Jesus Christ when making requests of the Father, or performing spiritual acts of service, or preaching the gospel? Is there some specific knowledge about the **name** that must be acquired in order to have our prayers or requests to the Father granted? And is this knowledge necessary to access the power of the Holy Spirit when performing our God-given duties? The answers to these questions are very important, because the answers have a direct impact upon our ability extend the Kingdom of God here on earth. Even more important, the answers also impact on our ability to perform various physical and spiritual deeds of power. When we were elevated together with Christ, we were also given responsibilities that accompany this high position of **authority**.

The practical definition of the word 'name' in both the Hebrew and the Greek languages denotes a mark or the identification of a person or thing. However, many times the 'name' of an individual mentioned in the Bible is used to express that person's **authority**, character, or reputation. It is also well known in biblical and rabbinical teachings that the phrase *'in the name of'* is used to connect the person having **authority** to the one from whom the authority comes, and to connect a teacher with the **authority** of the teacher who taught him.

Uttering the phrase *'in the name of Jesus Christ'* has no power or meaning in and of itself. More importantly, these words have no real power over anything, nor do they have the ability to cause anything to occur in the physical or spiritual realms unless the person who uses these words is authorised to use the **authority** and **power** that resides with God the Father in Christ Jesus. To speak *'in the name of Jesus Christ'* is to use one's authorisation as His representative - to speak in His stead and on His behalf. It is one thing to just say the words *'in the name of Jesus Christ'* without understanding what they are intended to mean or invoke. But it is another thing to understand the **authority** behind these words, when they are spoken by one who has been duly authorised by God to use the resurrection **power** of the Holy Spirit (through Christ Jesus).

The 'name' of Jesus Christ, who sits at the right hand of God as the High Priest of all humanity, is very powerful. This is not because the 'name' itself contains power, or the language in which this name is spoken is somehow holy. The *'name of Jesus Christ'* has **power** because of the absolute **authority** that comes from His supreme sovereignty. The Name describes and represents the highest ranking position in the universe - King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

Philippians 2:9-11, ***"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."***

When the apostles and others of the early church spoke, they clearly defined who they were speaking of and by whose **authority** they were performing supernatural works. They were even warned not to speak or teach in "that Name!" Acts

4:18, **"So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus."** When we speak, we should also make a clear distinction between our God and the gods of this world. This basic truth must be emphasised when representing God the Father or performing any supernatural deeds on His behalf. The Bible clearly shows that all existing **authority** and power resides in God the Father. It's through His authority and power that all things (and beings), whether physical or spiritual, are able to exist and exert physical or spiritual action and influence: Paul declares, **"Let every soul be subject to higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God; but the authorities that exist have been ordained by God"** (Romans 13:1).

While Pilate was questioning Jesus, he asked, *"Where do you come from?"* When Jesus did not respond to him, Pilate said, *"Why don't you speak to me? Don't you know that I have the authority to crucify you, and I have the authority to release you?"* Jesus answered and said, **"You would have no authority over me if it were not given to you from above"** (John 19:9-11). Likewise, we have no **authority** except the authority that has been given us from above! The truth is, ALL authority has been passed on to you and to me, (Matthew 28:18-19) and this **authority** is activated only when we use the '*name of Jesus Christ*'. The early church new exactly what it meant to use that wonderful Name. ***And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, "By what power or by what name have you done this?" Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole"*** (Acts 4:5-10).

Earlier, in Acts 3:6 we see why everyone was so upset... ***Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."*** When Peter used the Name he got miraculous results! This put fear into the rulers and religious people of his day. ***So that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name"*** (Acts 4:17). There's **authority** in the name of Jesus Christ! You can apply Jesus' **authority** to whatever challenges are confronting you because the '*name of Jesus*' has power over every evil thing that has been named. Think about this! Anything that has a name must submit to the '*name of Jesus Christ*' - in heaven, on earth and under the earth.

Jesus plainly told his disciples, ***"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask Me for anything in my name, and I will do it"*** (John 14:12-14 NIV).

Mentioned here is another aspect of Christ's **authority** in operation. When you ask something to be done *in the name of Jesus* He will do it. That word "ask" does not mean 'prayer' it means "command". Like when Paul commanded the devil to come out of the women in the name of Jesus, and he came out. Someone may say, *I'm not Jesus - I can't do that*, and you would be right, but it's not you doing it. Jesus is doing the work through you. And since Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever you can expect the same things to be done when you "command" things in His Name that He did.

Notice also, with the power and **authority** invested in the name of Jesus Christ, sickness and disease must leave (Acts 3:1-8). But you need to have true faith in that Name. You stand in for Jesus when you *command* evil spirits; therefore, they obey you just as if Jesus was present. You have **authority** over all the works of the devil through that Name. Evil

spirits are subject to you through the name of Jesus. So take the name of Jesus Christ and cause the devil to flee. Understand your total **authority** over the devil and use it daily. Remember this, the power and **authority** in using the name of Jesus Christ is not in the actual use of the words. They are not magical words in and of themselves. The awesome power demonstrated in the '*name of Jesus Christ*' is caused by the actual power and **authority** of Jesus Christ himself.

His governmental position is of the highest **authority** and that is put into action when ever we function in His name. We are being trained in, and for, Christ's government over all things in the earth. Jesus Christ's authority is ABSOLUTE authority. Our training consists of functioning as His representatives. First, in accepting our placement in Him; second, in functioning accordingly. Christ is Lord over all that is in heaven and upon the earth - with the exception of God (1 Corinthians 15:27-28). We are as He is RIGHT NOW (while we are still in this world). Therefore, function accordingly! Use the **authority** invested in the '*name of Jesus Christ*' and live a life of victory.

E W Kenyan said, "*The degree to which you use the name of Jesus, is the degree to which the forces of darkness will obey you.*" The Name of Jesus was given to the church 'to use'. Every mention in scripture of the use of the Name is in direct reference to the Body of Christ. When we became "coheirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17) we inherited His wonderful name. Therefore, whatever He has obtained, so have we! By inheritance Jesus obtained a more excellent name - a name that is exceedingly, far above and superior to every other Name. And, by inheritance it's ours too!

The Name of Jesus legally belongs to the church (His bride). When exercising **authority** on this earth we have the Name of Jesus. When we pray to the Father in His Name, God responds the same way He would if Jesus Himself had made the request. "In that name" the Father hears and gives us whatever we ask for (John 16:23)! Furthermore, Jesus has promised to personally endorse all our petitions to God, provided they are made in His Name (and are in line with His will). God's anointed Son is standing in the throne room of grace making intercession and what the Son approves, so does the Father!

The wonderful name of Jesus has total **authority** in three realms – *in heaven, on Earth and under the Earth* (that is to say in the spiritual and physical realms and even over dark spiritual forces). It is just as powerful and as effective in whatever dimension it is proclaimed. The early church knew this, and they prayed accordingly. Acts 4:30, "**By stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.**" When using the Name of Jesus you must be confident that you will get a response in the all three realms. The response you desire!

I have always been fascinated by the Name of Jesus Christ and it's many applications in the New Testament. But especially with regards the influence it has in the dimension of the spirit. There are so many scriptures confirming that the Name of Jesus Christ has complete **authority** in the spirit realm. For instance, the seventy returned with joy and said, "**Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name**" (Luke 10:17). Why did the forces of darkness submit to the Lord's name so readily? Quite simply, because the Name represents the **supreme authority** that is His!