

Understanding Authority

Video Study Guide



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Understanding Authority

Session 1: The Key to the Commission

Session 1 of 6

About This Series

Understanding Authority is a 6-session study that begins with a question: what is the key to the Great Commission? For years, the commission in Matthew 28 was read as a command — go, make disciples, baptize, teach. All of that is true. But the key that unlocks the ability to carry out the commission is found in verse 18, the sentence that comes before the command: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.' This series builds from that foundation — understanding what authority is, who has it, how Jesus exercised it, and how His people participate in it today.

Session 1 Overview

Session 1 establishes the foundation: the entire commissioning of believers rests on the authority of Jesus. The series opens with a personal account of reading Matthew 28 repeatedly, sensing something was being missed — until attention was drawn to verse 18. Authority is the hinge on which everything else turns. This session also traces authority back to its origin: Adam held delegated authority over the earth, lost it through the fall, and Jesus — the Last Adam — recovered it completely.

Key Scriptures

Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV)

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'

Genesis 1:26-28 (NKJV)

Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion...'

Ephesians 1:19-22 (NKJV)

...and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church.

Revelation 5:9-10 (NKJV)

...for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.

Core Teaching

1. The Moment of Revelation — Verse 18

Years of reading Matthew 28 had always landed on the command: go, make disciples, baptize, teach. These are the active verbs. The commission is clear. But something felt incomplete. Then a moment of attention was drawn to verse 18 — the sentence that comes first:

- 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.' This is not the commission — it is the ground of the commission.
- The word 'therefore' in verse 19 ('Go therefore') connects everything to verse 18. The command is issued on the basis of the authority. It is the authority that makes the commission possible.
- Without understanding His authority, the commission is just a command. With understanding His authority, it is an empowered sending from One who has absolute backing.
- The key to the Great Commission is not the command. It is the authority behind the command.

The Great Commission is not primarily a command — it is a commissioning grounded in the all-authority of Jesus. 'Go therefore' flows from 'All authority has been given to Me.'

2. Authority vs. Power — Two Different Words

Understanding authority requires distinguishing between two Greek words that are sometimes translated interchangeably in English but are different in meaning:

Greek Word	English Translation	What It Means
Exousia	Authority	The right or privilege to act — a legal, delegated, positional capacity. You have permission and standing.
Dunamis	Power	The ability or force to act — strength, capability, miraculous working. The energy to execute.

- Both are needed. In Acts 1:8, Jesus said 'you shall receive power (dunamis) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.' This is the empowerment.
- But authority (exousia) is the commissioning — the right to act. A police officer's badge is exousia. His physical strength or weapon is dunamis. The badge is what gives the authority; the power is what executes it.
- Jesus operated with both. He was anointed with the Spirit (dunamis) and carried the authority of the Father (exousia) as the Son.

3. Where Authority Originated — Creation and the Fall

To understand Jesus's recovered authority, we need to trace authority back to its beginning. Genesis 1:26-28 is the original grant of authority:

- 'Let them have dominion' — God delegated authority over the earth to humanity. This was not God's authority but His delegated authority — a representative rule on His behalf.
- Adam and Eve were created in God's image to represent Him, to rule in His name, as His stewards. The earth was their domain of authority.
- In Genesis 3, through the fall, Adam relinquished that authority. He submitted to the serpent rather than to God, and the delegated authority was forfeited.
- Romans 5:12 — 'through one man sin entered the world.' The first Adam's failure meant the loss of delegated authority over creation.

4. Jesus — The Last Adam Recovers Authority

1 Corinthians 15:45 calls Jesus 'the last Adam.' Where the first Adam failed and forfeited authority, the Last Adam succeeded and restored it:

- Jesus lived a sinless life — He did not forfeit authority through any act of disobedience. He remained in perfect alignment with the Father.
- He was crucified — and in His resurrection, He was raised 'far above all principality and power and might and dominion' (Ephesians 1:21). Death did not hold Him.
- Matthew 28:18 — 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.' He never lost authority in heaven. What He recovered at the resurrection was authority on earth — the domain that Adam had surrendered.

- Revelation 1:18 — 'I have the keys of death and Hades.' The enemy has been disarmed; Jesus holds the keys.

5. The Commission — Sent as He Was Sent

John 17:18 — 'As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.' Jesus draws a direct parallel between His sending from the Father and our sending from Him. The commission is not abstract — it is modeled on His own mission:

- He was sent with all authority from the Father. We are sent with His authority — a derived, delegated, relational authority that flows from union with Him.
- John 20:21 — 'As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' The pattern is exact.
- 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age' (Matthew 28:20) — the commission is not abandoned after the sending. The One who has all authority continues to accompany those He has commissioned.

6. Revelation 5 — The End of the Story

Revelation 5:9-10 gives us a glimpse of the final picture: those redeemed by His blood are described as 'kings and priests to our God' who 'shall reign on the earth.' The authority given in Genesis 1 — to have dominion, to represent God on earth — has been fully restored through the Lamb who was slain:

- 'Made us kings and priests' — both roles carry authority. Kings rule in His name. Priests intercede on behalf of others.
- 'We shall reign on the earth' — not just in heaven, not just spiritually. On the earth. The domain that Adam was given, that Jesus recovered, is the domain where His people reign.
- The arc of Scripture: authority given, authority forfeited, authority recovered, authority restored to His people through Christ.

Reflection Questions



Reflection Questions

1. Matthew 28:18 says all authority belongs to Jesus — and verse 19 says 'therefore go.' The commission flows from the authority. Has your understanding of the Great Commission started from the command or from the authority behind it? How does starting from 'all authority is His' change the posture with which you engage the commission?
2. The distinction between *exousia* (authority — the right to act) and *dunamis* (power — the ability to act) is important. In your experience of Christian life, have you experienced more of one than the other? Do you have a sense of authorization — the

right to act on behalf of Jesus — or does that feel presumptuous? What shapes that sense?

3. Adam forfeited delegated authority through the fall. Jesus — the Last Adam — recovered it completely. How does framing salvation in these terms (authority lost, authority recovered) add to your understanding of what the cross accomplished? Does it expand your picture of what Jesus did?
4. John 17:18 — 'As You sent Me, I also have sent them.' The parallel between Jesus's sending from the Father and our sending from Him is direct. Do you experience yourself as genuinely sent — authorized, backed, commissioned — or more as someone trying to do good on their own initiative? What is the difference in practice?
5. Revelation 5:10 — 'we shall reign on the earth.' This is the end of the story. Kings and priests in the earth. Does this vision of restored authority and dominion feel like your destination? How does seeing where the story ends change how you live in the middle of it?

Personal Application

✓ Personal Application

1. Read Matthew 28:16-20 slowly this week. Pay specific attention to the sequence: verse 18 (all authority is His) → verse 19 (therefore go). Every time you read the commission this week, pause on verse 18 and let the authority it declares sink in before reading the command. Let the ground change how you hear the call.
2. Look up Matthew 28:18, Luke 10:19, and Ephesians 1:19-22 as a connected set this week. Read them as one continuous statement about Jesus's authority and its relationship to believers. Ask: what does it mean that all things are under His feet — and we are His body?
3. Trace the authority thread through Scripture this week: Genesis 1:26-28 (authority given), Genesis 3 (authority forfeited), Matthew 28:18 (authority recovered), Revelation 5:10 (authority restored). Write a brief summary of what you see in that arc and what it means for how you live now.
4. Ask God specifically this week: 'Lord, do I live with a genuine sense of being sent by You — backed by Your authority? Or do I feel unauthorized, presumptuous, or unsure?' Let the answer be honest. Then bring whatever uncertainty arises to the truth of Matthew 28:18.
5. Pray Ephesians 1:15-23 this week as a personal prayer — asking for the revelation Paul prayed for: that you would know the hope of His calling, the richness of His inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of His power toward those who believe.

Key Terms

Term	Definition
Exousia	Greek: authority — the right, privilege, or legal standing to act. The commissioning component of authority. What gives someone the right to act in another's name.
Dunamis	Greek: power — the ability, strength, or miraculous energy to act. The empowering component. The Holy Spirit provides dunamis; the commission provides exousia.
The Last Adam	1 Corinthians 15:45 — Jesus. Where the first Adam forfeited delegated authority through the fall, the Last Adam recovered it fully through His sinless life, death, and resurrection.
Delegated Authority	Authority given by one party to another to act on their behalf. God delegated authority to Adam over the earth. Jesus now delegates His recovered authority to His people.
The Great Commission	Matthew 28:18-20 — the commissioning of believers to make disciples. Grounded in and flowing from Jesus's all-authority: 'All authority is Mine — therefore go.'

Series Overview

Session	Title	Core Focus
1	The Key to the Commission	Matthew 28:18 reread; all authority belongs to Jesus; the Great Commission is grounded in His authority; authority (exousia) vs. power (dunamis); Adam's lost authority, Jesus restores it
2	Jesus as the Model — Kingdom in Action	Matthew 4:23 and the kingdom ministry; church mentioned only twice; Lord's Prayer as a kingdom prayer; healing accounts in Matthew 8 and 9; He healed all who came
3	Do We Have Authority? — The Commission to the Twelve	Matthew 9:35-10:1; exousia given to the Twelve; the harvest and the laborers; Mark 16:15-18; the 70 return; Luke 10:17-19; authority over the enemy

4	The Church, the Keys, and the Victory	Matthew 16:13-19; Peter's revelation; the ekklesia; storming the gates; keys of the kingdom — binding and loosing; Ephesians 1 apostolic prayer; Revelation 5 — kings and priests on earth
5	The Extent and Limits of Our Authority	Ephesians 1:19-22 and 6:10-18; battle from victory; Jesus only did what He saw the Father do; the policeman illustration; not lone wolves; authority in concert with heaven
6	Authority Is a Relational Issue	Matthew 8:5-13 — the centurion; authority requires being under authority; faith to submit; four spheres of authority; the umbrella illustration; Acts 4 — when to draw the line

Notes

Understanding Authority

Session 2: Jesus as the Model — Kingdom in Action

Session 2 of 6

Session 2 Overview

Session 1 established that all authority belongs to Jesus and that the Great Commission flows from that authority. Session 2 turns to Jesus Himself as the model. If we are commissioned to represent Him, then understanding what He did — and how — is essential. Jesus's ministry was first and foremost about the Kingdom of God. The church is mentioned only twice in Matthew; the Kingdom is referenced over a hundred times in the Gospels. The Kingdom cannot be discussed without discussing authority, and Jesus demonstrated His authority in specific, patterned ways that become the blueprint for His people.

Key Scriptures

Matthew 4:23-24 (NKJV)

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.

Matthew 6:9-10 (NKJV)

In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Matthew 8:2-3 (NKJV)

And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.' Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Matthew 8:23-27 (NKJV)

Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea... But He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. So the men marveled, saying, 'Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?'

Matthew 9:35 (NKJV)

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Core Teaching

1. The Kingdom Is His Primary Message

Jesus's central subject was not the church, not personal morality, not even salvation as we typically frame it. His central subject was the Kingdom of God:

- The Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven is referenced more than a hundred times across the four Gospels.
- The church is mentioned only twice in Matthew (16:18 and 18:17) — both significant but not the predominant theme.
- Even at the end of Acts, Paul is still 'preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God' (Acts 28:31).
- Understanding authority requires understanding the Kingdom, because the Kingdom is the king's domain — the sphere in which His rule and reign operate. You cannot talk about a kingdom without discussing who has authority in it.

2. Matthew 4:23 — The Threefold Ministry Pattern

Matthew 4:23 and 9:35 provide nearly identical descriptions of Jesus's ministry activity. This repetition is intentional — it establishes a pattern:

The Activity	What It Is	The Authority It Demonstrates
Teaching in synagogues	Systematic instruction in truth	Authority over the mind and understanding
Preaching the gospel of the Kingdom	Proclamation of the King's arrival and rule	Authority to declare and announce on behalf of the King
Healing all sickness and disease	Physical restoration of the sick	Authority over sickness, disease, and physical disorder

These three together are the complete model: word, proclamation, and demonstration. Preaching without demonstration is incomplete. Demonstration without proclamation lacks context. The model is always all three together.

3. The Lord's Prayer — A Kingdom Prayer

The model prayer Jesus gave His disciples in Matthew 6 is fundamentally a Kingdom prayer. 'Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven' establishes the direction of all prayer:

- We are praying for the King's domain to expand — for His rule and reign to come to earth, to replace what is out of order with what is in order.
- 'On earth as it is in heaven' — there is no sickness in heaven, no demonic oppression, no injustice. The prayer is for heaven's reality to manifest in earthly conditions.
- This is authority prayer: praying from knowledge of what is already true in heaven and calling it forth on earth.
- Prayer is the first exercise of Kingdom authority. Before any action, there is the declaration of alignment with the King.

The Lord's Prayer is a Kingdom prayer. 'Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven' is the prayer of someone who understands authority — calling heaven's reality into earthly reality.

4. He Healed All Who Came — The Reach of His Authority

One of the most significant observations about Jesus's healing ministry is its comprehensiveness. He did not select some and decline others:

- Matthew 4:24 — 'they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.' All of them.
- Matthew 8:16 — 'He healed all who were sick.' The completeness is stated explicitly.
- No one came to Him for healing who was turned away. Not one person in the Gospels asked for healing and was refused.
- This is significant for understanding the will of God: His will is to heal, to deliver, to set free. Jesus demonstrated it comprehensively. He only did what He saw the Father doing — so the Father's will is clearly healing.

5. His Authority Over Multiple Domains

Walking through Matthew, the range of what Jesus exercised authority over becomes remarkable:

Domain	The Account	The Authority Demonstrated
Sickness and disease	Leper cleansed (Matt. 8:2-3); Peter's	Over physical disorder in the body

	mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14)	
Demonic spirits	Many cast out with a word (Matt. 8:16); the Gadarene (Matt. 8:28-32)	Over spiritual forces and oppression
Paralysis and physical structure	Paralytic rose and walked (Matt. 9:2-7)	Over structural physical conditions
Death	Jairus's daughter raised (Matt. 9:18-25)	Over death itself
The natural world	Sea stilled (Matt. 8:23-27)	Over nature and created order
Spiritual blindness	Two blind men healed (Matt. 9:27-31)	Over sight in both physical and spiritual dimensions

There was no domain where His authority was absent. What was out of order — in the physical, the spiritual, the natural world — came into order when He spoke.

6. He Only Did What He Saw the Father Do

John 5:19 is one of the most clarifying verses in the Gospels: 'The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.' This principle is the operational framework of Jesus's authority:

- He operated in concert with the Father, not independently. His authority was real but relational — exercised in alignment with the One who commissioned Him.
- John 12:49 — 'I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.'
- He did not heal everyone He encountered — He healed all who came to Him, and He operated wherever the Father directed. The pool of Bethesda: He healed one. Not because He lacked authority but because He operated by discernment, not by indiscriminate action.
- This same pattern applies to us. We have been given authority. But that authority operates relationally — in hearing, in discernment, in alignment with the King. Not lone-wolf independence.

Reflection Questions



Reflection Questions

1. The Kingdom of God is mentioned over a hundred times in the Gospels; the church is mentioned twice. Does this proportion match the emphasis in how you have experienced Christian teaching? What would it mean to center your understanding of Jesus's ministry on the Kingdom rather than on the church?
2. Matthew 4:23 — teaching, preaching the Kingdom, healing. These three are consistently together in Jesus's ministry description. Which of the three is most present in the expression of Christianity you are part of? Which is most absent? What is the effect of the absence?
3. The Lord's Prayer — 'Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven' — is a prayer of authority: calling heaven's reality into earthly conditions. Is this how you have understood and prayed the Lord's Prayer? What changes in how you pray it when you see it as a Kingdom authority prayer?
4. He healed all who came to Him. Not some — all. No one was turned away. What does the comprehensiveness of Jesus's healing ministry say about the Father's will? And if He only did what He saw the Father doing, what does it say about the Father's heart toward the sick?
5. John 5:19 — Jesus only did what He saw the Father doing. He operated relationally, not independently. In your own life, is there a tendency to act on your own initiative in the name of Jesus — doing what you think He would want — rather than first discerning what He is actually doing? What is the difference in practice?

Personal Application



Personal Application

1. Read Matthew 4:23-9:35 this week as a continuous narrative — the ministry of Jesus in Matthew. Pay attention to the variety of what He healed, the different contexts, the different people, and what is consistent across all of them. Make a list of everything He exercised authority over.
2. Pray the Lord's Prayer this week as a Kingdom authority prayer. When you say 'Your kingdom come,' name what you want to see brought into order in your life, your family, or your community. Make it specific: 'Lord, Your kingdom come in [this situation]. Your will be done in [this person's life] as it is in heaven.'
3. Sit with John 5:19 and John 12:49 this week. Jesus only did what He saw the Father doing and only said what the Father commanded. Ask God: 'What does it look like for me to operate this way — hearing You, discerning where You are moving, acting in alignment rather than on my own initiative?' Ask Him to begin teaching you that attentiveness.
4. Read Matthew 8 specifically as a record of Jesus's authority in different domains. For each account, ask: what was out of order? How did He bring order? What does this

tell me about the domain of His authority? Let the cumulative picture expand your sense of what His authority covers.

5. Find one situation this week — a person who is sick, a circumstance that is out of order, something that needs the Kingdom to come — and offer to pray for it. Not with great fanfare or pressure. Simply: 'Can I pray for you? I believe Jesus has authority over this.' Then trust the outcome to Him.

Connecting the Sessions

Session	Title	Core Truth
1	The Key to the Commission	The Great Commission is grounded in Jesus's all-authority. The commission flows from the authority. Adam lost it; Jesus — the Last Adam — recovered it.
2	Jesus as the Model	Jesus preached the Kingdom and demonstrated it by healing and casting out demons. He is our model. What He did, we are commissioned to do.

Notes

Understanding Authority

Session 3: Do We Have Authority? — The Commission to the Twelve and the Seventy

Session 3 of 6

Session 3 Overview

Sessions 1 and 2 established Jesus's all-authority and the model of how He exercised it. Session 3 addresses the central question of the series: do we have authority? Jesus had it without question. But does that authority belong to His followers? The answer is found in the commissioning passages — particularly the sending of the Twelve in Matthew 10, the sending of the Seventy in Luke 10, and the closing commission in Mark 16. The word used for what the Twelve received is not 'power' (dunamis) but 'authority' (exousia) — the same word.

Key Scriptures

Matthew 9:35-10:1 (NKJV)

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them... Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.' And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

Matthew 10:7-8 (NKJV)

And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

Luke 10:1, 9, 17-19 (NKJV)

After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go... 'Heal the sick there, and say to them, The kingdom of God has come near you'... Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.' And He said to them... 'Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.'

Mark 16:15-18 (NKJV)

And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature... And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.'

Core Teaching

1. Matthew 9:35-10:1 — The Flow from Compassion to Commission

The flow from Matthew 9:35 to Matthew 10:1 is often interrupted by the chapter break — but originally there were no chapters. It was one continuous text. Reading it continuously reveals an important sequence:

- Jesus was doing ministry (9:35): preaching the Kingdom, healing every sickness and disease.
- He saw the multitudes — 'weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.' He was moved with compassion (9:36).
- His response to the harvest problem: 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray for laborers to be sent.' (9:37-38)
- Then immediately (10:1): He called the Twelve and gave them authority.
- The prayer for laborers and the commissioning of the Twelve are one continuous response to the compassion He felt. The compassion led to prayer; the prayer led to sending; the sending came with authority.

The harvest is not the problem — the laborers are few. The need is not more of Jesus moving — it is more people who have been given His authority, going in His name.

2. The Word Is Exousia — Not Dunamis

Matthew 10:1 in the NKJV reads 'He gave them power over unclean spirits.' But the underlying Greek word is *exousia* — authority — not *dunamis* (power). This distinction matters:

- The Twelve received *exousia* — the right, the legal standing, the commission to act. They were authorized.
- *Dunamis* — the supernatural empowerment — would come later at Pentecost. Jesus told them in Acts 1:8: 'You shall receive power (*dunamis*) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.'
- So the order is: first, the commission and the authority (*exousia*) given by Jesus in His earthly ministry. Then, the empowerment (*dunamis*) given by the Spirit at Pentecost. Both are necessary. Both are given.

- The Twelve were not told to generate their own ability. They were given the right to act in His name. That is the gift — authorization.

3. Matthew 10:7-8 — The Commission in Detail

The instructions Jesus gave the Twelve mirror His own ministry precisely: preach the Kingdom, heal the sick, cleanse lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons:

- 'Preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand' — the proclamation is first. Context for everything that follows.
- 'Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons' — the demonstrations that confirm the proclamation.
- 'Freely you have received, freely give' — what they have been given is not for keeping but for releasing. Authority is not a possession to protect — it is a commission to fulfill.
- The scope is remarkable: not just healing common ailments but lepers (the most stigmatized), not just healing but raising the dead, not just helping people but casting out demons. The authority is comprehensive.

4. The Seventy Return — 'Even the Demons Are Subject to Us'

Luke 10 records Jesus sending out an even broader group — seventy — with a similar commission. Their return is one of the most significant moments in the Gospels for understanding the scope of delegated authority:

- They returned 'with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name' (v.17). They were not reporting what Jesus had done — they were reporting what had happened when they acted in His name.
- Jesus's response: 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.' Their exercise of delegated authority had cosmic consequences.
- 'Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you' (v.19).
- The authority extends to 'all the power of the enemy' — not a partial or limited domain. His authority given to us exceeds the enemy's power.

5. The Signs That Follow — Mark 16

Mark 16:15-18 provides the most comprehensive statement of what accompanies the commissioning to 'go into all the world':

The Sign	What It Demonstrates
Casting out demons in His name	Authority over spiritual forces — the same exousia Jesus exercised

Speaking with new tongues	Authority through the Spirit's enabling — Spirit-empowered communication
Unharmd by serpents or deadly things	Protection under His authority — the enemy cannot override the commission
Laying hands on the sick, they recover	Authority over physical sickness — the continuation of Jesus's healing ministry

These signs 'follow those who believe.' The common denominator is not a title, not a level of education or ministry experience — it is belief. Those who believe in Jesus's authority and go in His name can expect these signs to accompany them.

6. The Harvest Is Still Waiting

One of the most pointed statements in the series comes from Matthew 9:37: 'The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.' This statement is as true today as when it was first spoken:

- The harvest — people who need the Kingdom — is not the limitation. God's provision for the harvest is not the limitation.
- The limitation is the laborers — those who have been given authority but who are not going, not praying for the sick, not engaging the commission with what they have been given.
- We have probably more authority than we have been exercising. The invitation of this series is not to assume a position of authority we do not have — it is to live in the authority we have already been given.

Reflection Questions



Reflection Questions

1. Matthew 9:35-10:1 connects Jesus's compassion for the harvest directly to the commissioning of the Twelve. Is there a compassion in you for people who are sick, broken, or in bondage — a compassion that could be the beginning of engagement rather than observation? What is compassion calling you toward?
2. The word given to the Twelve in Matthew 10:1 is *exousia* — authority, not power. They were authorized before they were empowered at Pentecost. Have you received both? Do you experience a sense of being authorized — having the right to act in Jesus's name — or is there a sense that the authority belongs to someone else?
3. Luke 10:17 — the Seventy returned saying 'even the demons are subject to us in Your name.' They were surprised. Their expectations were apparently not that high. What expectations do you carry when you pray for someone, engage in spiritual warfare, or speak the name of Jesus over a situation? Are they closer to expectation or surprise?

4. Mark 16:17-18 says these signs follow 'those who believe.' The qualifier is belief. Is there an area where your lack of expectation — functionally not believing these signs will occur — is preventing you from acting? What specific unbelief needs to be addressed?
5. The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. We likely have more authority than we have been exercising. Does that statement provoke conviction, encouragement, or something else? What would it look like for you to step more fully into the authority you have already been given?

Personal Application

✓ Personal Application

1. Read Matthew 10:1-15 this week as the commissioning it is. Pay attention to what the Twelve were given (authority), what they were sent to do (preach, heal, cast out demons), and what they were told about provision (freely received, freely give). Ask God: is this a model I am meant to follow? What would obedience to this commission look like in my specific context?
2. Read Luke 10:1-20 as the parallel account. Pay special attention to verse 17 — the disciples' joy and surprise — and Jesus's response in verse 19. Ask: what would it mean for me to operate with the expectation that Jesus's authority over the enemy is real and that He has given it to me? What would change about how I pray, how I engage, how I approach difficult situations?
3. Find one situation this week where you sense God calling you to exercise the authority you have been given — praying for a sick person, speaking truth into a spiritually dark situation, engaging with authority rather than passivity. Step into it. Afterwards, reflect on what happened — not primarily to evaluate success but to notice your own faith and posture.
4. Pray Matthew 9:37-38 as a genuine prayer this week: 'Lord, the harvest is plentiful. The laborers are few. Send out laborers into Your harvest — including me.' Let the prayer be both a request and a surrender — making yourself available to be one of the laborers sent.
5. Memorize Luke 10:19: 'Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.' Speak it as a declaration in situations where the enemy's activity is evident. Let it become a standing truth you live from.

Connecting the Sessions

Session	Title	Core Truth
1	The Key to the Commission	The Great Commission is grounded in Jesus's all-authority. The commission flows from the authority. Adam lost it; Jesus — the Last Adam — recovered it.
2	Jesus as the Model	Jesus preached the Kingdom and demonstrated it by healing and casting out demons. He is our model. What He did, we are commissioned to do.
3	Do We Have Authority?	Yes — the Twelve received exousia (authority) to do the same works. The 70 returned marveling that demons submitted to them in Jesus's name.

Notes

Understanding Authority

Session 4: The Church, the Keys, and the Victory

Session 4 of 6

Session 4 Overview

Session 3 established that the Twelve and the Seventy were given real authority — exousia — to operate in Jesus's name. Session 4 examines the broader context: what is the entity that Jesus is building, and what has He given it? Matthew 16 introduces the church for the first time — and the picture Jesus gives is far more active and authoritative than most people have understood. The gates of Hades will not prevail against it — because the church is supposed to be advancing, not defending. The keys of the Kingdom are given for a reason. And Ephesians 1 shows that the victory that grounds all of this is total and complete.

Key Scriptures

Matthew 16:13-19 (NKJV)

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, 'Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?'... Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And 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.'

Ephesians 1:17-23 (NKJV)

...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe... which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion... And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body.

Revelation 5:9-10 (NKJV)

...for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.

Core Teaching

1. Matthew 16 — The Church Introduced

Matthew 16 is the only place in the Gospels where Jesus introduces the word 'church' — and He introduces it in a specific, deliberate context:

- He first asks: 'Who do men say that I am?' The disciples report various opinions.
- He then asks: 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answers: 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'
- Jesus responds: 'Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.' This is a revelation — a Spirit-given recognition, not a human conclusion.
- Then He says: 'On this rock I will build My church.' The rock is the revelation of who Jesus is. The church is built on that foundation.

2. Ekklesia — Not a Religious Building

Jesus chose a specific word for what He was building: ekklesia. This choice is intentional and revealing:

- Ekklesia is not a religious or biblical word. Jesus could have said 'temple,' 'synagogue,' or 'sanctuary.' He chose a secular term that the Greeks had used for centuries and the Romans had adopted.
- In the secular world, the ekklesia was the ruling body of a city — the assembly of citizens called out to govern, to make decisions, to represent authority. It is approximately what we would call a city council or governing assembly.
- The prefix ek means 'out of.' The ekklesia are the called-out ones — called out of darkness into His marvelous light, and then called out into the world to rule and reign in His name.
- Jesus is not building a sanctuary where people come to receive. He is building a governing body — a called-out people who go to represent His rule and reign in the world.

The ekklesia is not a building where we meet. It is a governing assembly — a ruling body called out to represent the King and advance His Kingdom in the world.

3. The Gates of Hades Will Not Prevail — We Are Advancing

'The gates of Hades will not prevail against it' is one of the most misunderstood statements in the Gospels:

- Gates do not attack. Gates are defensive structures. The image is of a fortress — something that holds people captive.
- If the gates are the enemy's defensive structure, and the church is advancing against them, then the church is the one on offense. The church is storming the gates, not the gates storming the church.
- The prevailing imagery in much of modern Christianity is a defensive church — holding on, protecting its membership, hoping to survive until Jesus returns. That is not the picture Jesus gave.
- The picture is an advancing ekklesia, a ruling body going into occupied territory, setting captives free. The gates of Hades — the strongholds that hold people captive — will not be able to withstand the advance of the church that knows who Jesus is and acts in His name.

4. The Keys — Authority to Represent Heaven on Earth

'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.' The keys are an image of authority:

- A key gives access to something. A key given to a representative means they have access to the space on behalf of the owner.
- 'Keys of the kingdom' — Jesus is giving His people access to the Kingdom's authority and resources to deploy on earth.
- Binding and loosing: 'Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' This is not arbitrary declaration — it is operating in alignment with what is already true in heaven.
- We don't bind what we want and loose what we want. We bind what is already bound in heaven and loose what is already loosed in heaven. The direction is from heaven to earth, not from our preference outward.

5. Ephesians 1 — The Apostolic Prayer for Revelation

Ephesians 1:17-23 is one of the most important prayers in the New Testament for understanding authority. Paul is not praying for something new to happen — he is praying that believers would see what has already been accomplished:

The Prayer Request	What It Reveals
Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him	Knowing God, not just knowing about Him. Personal, relational knowledge.

Know what is the hope of His calling	God has called us for this time — revelation of His purpose for our lives now.
Know the riches of His inheritance in the saints	We are His inheritance. And we have an inheritance. Both dimensions.
Know the exceeding greatness of His power toward us	The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is the power available to those who believe.

The prayer culminates in the statement about the resurrection: 'He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named... And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body.' The church is His body. What is under His feet is under the body's feet too.

6. Revelation 5 — The End of the Story

Revelation 5:9-10 gives the final picture: 'You have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.' This is where the story ends:

- Made us kings and priests — both roles of authority and representation.
- 'We shall reign on the earth' — not retreating from the earth, not abandoning it to the enemy, but reigning on it. The domain that Adam was given, Jesus recovered, and His people are restored to.
- The church's mission is not to hold on until evacuation. It is to advance until the King returns and consummates everything that has been prepared.

Reflection Questions



Reflection Questions

1. Jesus chose the word *ekklesia* — a secular governing and ruling body — to describe what He was building. Not a sanctuary, not a religious gathering. A ruling body. Does that word change how you think about the purpose of the church? What would it mean for your local church expression to function as an *ekklesia* — a governing body representing the King's rule in your community?
2. 'The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it' — and gates are defensive, not offensive. The church is the one advancing against the gates. How much of your experience of church has been defensive (protecting what you have, hoping to hold on) versus offensive (advancing, setting captives free, storming the gates)? What would the shift look like?

3. The keys of the Kingdom are given for binding and loosing — but the direction is from heaven to earth. We bind what is already bound; we loose what is already loosed. Does your engagement in spiritual authority operate from discernment of what is true in heaven, or more from personal declaration of what you want to see happen? What is the difference?
4. Ephesians 1 is a prayer for revelation — not for new information but for the eyes of the heart to be opened to what is already true. Paul prays this for people who already know the gospel. Is there a truth about God's authority and your participation in it that you know intellectually but have not yet seen with the eyes of your heart? What would it mean to pray Ephesians 1:17-19 over yourself daily?
5. Revelation 5:10 — 'we shall reign on the earth.' This is the end of the story. How does knowing where the story ends change how you engage your present circumstances — especially situations that look like the enemy is winning, or where you feel the church is losing ground?

Personal Application

✓ Personal Application

1. Read Matthew 16:13-20 this week in light of this session. Every time you read 'church,' substitute 'ekklesia' mentally and ask: what would an ekklesia in my neighborhood look like? What would a governing, ruling, advancing body of believers do differently from what I have experienced? Write down your thoughts.
2. Pray Ephesians 1:17-23 every day this week — slowly and personally. 'Father, I ask for the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of You. Open the eyes of my heart. Let me know the hope of Your calling. Let me know the greatness of Your power toward me who believes — the same power that raised Jesus from the dead.' Let it become genuine petition, not recitation.
3. Find the balance this week between the two realities: the victory is complete and secure in Christ (Ephesians 1:20-22) and the warfare is real (Ephesians 6:10-18). Read both passages back to back. Ask: what does it mean to fight from victory rather than for victory? How does certainty of the outcome change the engagement?
4. Read Revelation 5:6-10 this week — specifically the vision of the Lamb who is also a Lion, and the declaration that His people 'shall reign on the earth.' Sit with that vision as your destination. Ask: does my daily life reflect someone who is on the way to reigning on earth, or someone who is just trying to survive?
5. Identify one specific 'gate' in your community — a stronghold that holds people captive: addiction, poverty, broken families, spiritual deception. Commit to praying for that stronghold to be broken — specifically, consistently, with authority. This is not abstract prayer. It is the ekklesia advancing against the gates.

Connecting the Sessions

Session	Title	Core Truth
1	The Key to the Commission	The Great Commission is grounded in Jesus's all-authority. The commission flows from the authority. Adam lost it; Jesus — the Last Adam — recovered it.
2	Jesus as the Model	Jesus preached the Kingdom and demonstrated it by healing and casting out demons. He is our model. What He did, we are commissioned to do.
3	Do We Have Authority?	Yes — the Twelve received exousia (authority) to do the same works. The 70 returned marveling that demons submitted to them in Jesus's name.
4	The Church, the Keys, and the Victory	The ekklesia is a ruling body commissioned to storm the gates — not hide behind them. The keys are authority to represent heaven on earth. Victory is secure in Christ.

Notes

Understanding Authority

Session 5: The Extent and Limits of Our Authority

Session 5 of 6

Session 5 Overview

Session 4 established the church as an ekklesia — a ruling, advancing body with the keys of the Kingdom. Session 5 addresses the natural follow-on questions: how much authority do we actually have? Over what domains? And are there limits? These questions are handled directly in the transcripts — with both the scope of authority (Ephesians 1, Luke 10) and its proper operating conditions (in harmony with the Father, not as lone wolves). The policeman illustration makes the principle concrete: real authority that is still dangerous to operate alone and out of concert with heaven.

Key Scriptures

Ephesians 1:19-22 (NKJV)

...the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body.

Ephesians 6:10-12, 17-18 (NKJV)

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places... And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.

Luke 10:19 (NKJV)

Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

John 5:19 (NKJV)

Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.'

John 17:18 (NKJV)

As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

Core Teaching

1. Two Passages That Seem to Contradict — But Don't

Ephesians 1 and Ephesians 6, read in sequence, present a striking tension that must be held together:

- Ephesians 1:21-22 — Jesus is 'far above all principality and power and might and dominion.' All things are under His feet. Since we are His body and He is the head, all things are under our feet too.
- Ephesians 6:12 — 'We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age.'
- These are not contradictions. Both are simultaneously true. The enemy is under Jesus's feet — defeated, stripped of ultimate authority. And there is still warfare. Both realities are present.
- The resolution: we fight from victory, not for victory. The outcome is not in question. The engagement is real. 'Having done all, stand' — this is an aggressive posture of resistance, not passive waiting.

We fight from victory, not for victory. The enemy is defeated — under Jesus's feet and therefore under ours. But the warfare is real and our engagement is required.

2. What Is Our Authority Over? — The Domains

Based on what Jesus exercised authority over and what He commissioned His disciples to do, the domains of our delegated authority appear to be:

Domain of Authority	Biblical Basis
Sickness and physical disease	Matthew 10:8; Mark 16:18; Luke 10:9 — 'heal the sick'

Demonic spirits	Matthew 10:1; Luke 10:17-19 — 'cast out demons'; authority over all the power of the enemy
Things that are out of order	The overall pattern of Jesus's ministry bringing order wherever disorder existed
The natural world	Jesus stilled the storm — though this operates in full discernment and concert with the Father

The scope is real and broad. Luke 10:19 is not modest: 'authority over all the power of the enemy.' At the same time, the operation of this authority is not automatic or independent of relationship with the Father.

3. The Policeman Illustration — Authority With Limits

One of the most helpful illustrations for understanding delegated authority is the police officer:

The Policeman and the Riot

A duly authorized police officer carries real authority — badge, uniform, weapon. He is in proper relationship with his department, which relates to the state government, which ultimately has the backing of the federal government. In principle, he has the full authority of the nation backing his badge.

But if there is a riot in the street and he is alone with his pistol and billy club — he can still be killed.

This does not mean his authority is not real. It means that authority, while genuine, does not operate safely in isolation.

The same is true of spiritual authority. We have been given real authority in Jesus's name. But we are not called to be lone wolves — acting independently, outside of covering, concert with heaven, or accountability.

4. Jesus Only Did What He Saw the Father Do

The operating model of Jesus — 'the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do' (John 5:19) — is the same operating model for those He has commissioned. This principle establishes both the reality of authority and the relational nature of its operation:

- Jesus did not heal everyone He encountered — He healed all who came to Him, and He acted where the Father directed. The Pool of Bethesda: one person healed, not all. Not because of limited authority but because of relational discernment.
- 'I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak' (John 12:49).
- This is our model. Not: what do I want to do? Not: what do I think God would want? But: what is the Father actually doing, and what is He saying?

- Authority operates best in attentiveness — in a posture of hearing and following, not of independent initiative in God's name.

5. Not Lone Wolves — A Corporate Authority

One of the clearest practical principles of this series: the authority Jesus has given is not designed to be exercised in isolation:

- Israel was a people group — God's called-out ones, a collective. Not isolated individuals representing God independently.
- Jesus sent the Twelve in pairs and the Seventy in pairs (Luke 10:1). He built community and accountability into the exercise of authority from the beginning.
- The armor of God in Ephesians 6 is plural — written to a corporate body. This is corporate warfare, not just individual spiritual discipline.
- The church as ekklesia is a collective governing body. It functions in community, in accountability, in relationship — not as a collection of isolated individuals each doing their own thing.

6. Authority in Concert With Heaven

The summary principle: 'We've been called into relationship with He who has all authority. From that position of authority, we've been authorized to represent Him.' The scope is:

- We have been authorized — the authority is real and comprehensive.
- We operate in relationship — connected to the One who has all authority, in discernment with what He is doing and saying.
- We operate in community — not lone wolves but as a body, in accountability and partnership.
- We fight from victory — the outcome is secure; the engagement is required; the posture is confident advance, not fearful defense.

Reflection Questions



Reflection Questions

1. Ephesians 1 says all things are under His feet, and we are His body. Ephesians 6 says we wrestle against principalities and powers. Both are simultaneously true. How do you currently hold those two realities? Do you tend toward one at the expense of the other — either overconfident (ignoring the warfare) or fearful (ignoring the victory)?
2. The policeman illustration: real authority that is still dangerous to operate alone. Have you ever stepped into spiritual authority in an isolated, lone-wolf way — acting independently, without covering, without accountability, without discernment? What

happened? What does the illustration say about why accountability and community matter?

3. Jesus only healed those who came to Him, and He operated in perfect concert with the Father — not healing everyone He encountered but operating by discernment. How do you develop that kind of attentiveness — the ability to see what the Father is doing and act in alignment with it? What is your current practice for listening before acting?
4. Luke 10:19 — 'I give you authority over all the power of the enemy.' This is comprehensive. And yet many believers rarely exercise spiritual authority with any confidence. What is the gap between the authority stated in that verse and the authority you actually live from? What produces the gap?
5. The authority is real, relational, and corporate. Which of those three characteristics is most underdeveloped in your engagement with spiritual authority? What would it look like to develop it?

Personal Application

✓ Personal Application

1. Read Ephesians 1:19-22 and Ephesians 6:10-18 back to back this week — twice each. After reading them together, write out in your own words how they relate to each other. What does it mean to 'stand' in Ephesians 6 in light of what has already been accomplished in Ephesians 1? How does the posture of the standing change?
2. Identify one area in your life where you have been operating in spiritual authority in isolation — without accountability, without community, without discernment. Invite someone else into that situation. Ask a trusted person to pray with you. Move from lone-wolf engagement to corporate, accountable authority.
3. Practice attentiveness this week before acting. Before you pray for someone, before you speak into a situation, before you engage with something spiritually — pause and ask: 'Father, what are You doing here? What are You saying?' Wait for a sense of direction before acting. Notice the difference between action that arises from discernment and action that arises from initiative.
4. Read John 5:19-20 and John 12:49 this week. Jesus's operating model is full dependence on the Father — seeing what the Father does, hearing what the Father says. Ask God to begin teaching you this same attentiveness. Ask specifically: 'Lord, where are You moving in my world right now? What are You saying? Help me to see and hear before I act.'
5. Memorize Ephesians 6:12: 'We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age.' When you are frustrated with a person, a situation, or a circumstance — speak this verse. Redirect your engagement from the surface-level human dimension to the spiritual dimension where the actual battle is occurring.

Connecting the Sessions

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4	The Church, the Keys, and the Victory	The ekklesia is a ruling body commissioned to storm the gates — not hide behind them. The keys are authority to represent heaven on earth. Victory is secure in Christ.
5	Extent and Limits	Authority is real but relational. We fight from victory but still fight. We are not lone wolves — we operate in concert with the Father, as Jesus did.

Notes

Understanding Authority

Session 6: Authority Is a Relational Issue

Session 6 of 6 | Series Finale

Session 6 Overview

Session 5 established the scope and relational nature of our authority. Session 6 brings the series to its conclusion with the centurion of Matthew 8 — perhaps the most instructive account in the Gospels about how authority actually works. The centurion understood something the disciples were still learning: authority flows to those who are under authority. It is not a badge to wave — it is a relational position to inhabit. This session also addresses the spheres of authority, the meaning of the umbrella illustration, the faith required to submit, and the line between submission and obedience to what is wrong.

Key Scriptures

Matthew 8:5-13 (NKJV)

Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, 'Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.' And Jesus said to him, 'I will come and heal him.' The centurion answered and said, 'Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this 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 it, He marveled and said to those who followed, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!'... Then Jesus said to the centurion, 'Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.' And his servant was healed that same hour.

Romans 13:1 (NKJV)

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

Acts 4:18-20 (NKJV)

So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.'

Core Teaching

1. The Centurion — An Unlikely Authority Teacher

Matthew 8:5-13 contains what may be the most instructive moment in the Gospels about how authority works. A Roman military officer — not a Jew, not a disciple, not someone with theological training — demonstrates a level of understanding about authority that Jesus says He has not found anywhere in Israel:

- The centurion had authority — he commanded a hundred soldiers. When he told them to go, they went. When he told them to come, they came. His authority was real.
- But the key statement is not 'I am a man who has authority.' It is: 'I also am a man under authority.' The source of his authority over others was his being properly positioned under authority himself.
- He perceived Jesus the same way. He did not ask Jesus to come — he asked only that Jesus speak a word. He recognized that Jesus operated under an authority so complete that distance was irrelevant. The word of someone under full authority carries full authority.
- Jesus marveled. This level of understanding of authority — that it flows from being under authority — was greater faith than He had found anywhere in Israel.

Authority flows to those who are under authority. The centurion's power over his soldiers came from his proper submission to the chain of command above him. The same principle operates in the spiritual realm.

2. Authority Is Not Independent — It Is Relational

The centurion's insight becomes the capstone of the entire series: authority is a relational issue. It is not something you generate by personal effort, spiritual intensity, or force of will. It flows from relationship:

- Jesus had authority because He was in perfect alignment with and submission to the Father. 'The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do.'
- The Twelve and the Seventy had authority because Jesus sent them — relational commissioning from the One who has all authority.
- We have authority because we are in Christ — in Him who is far above all principality and power, and to whom all authority has been given.
- No place does authority work independent of relationship. The badge means nothing without the chain of command. The name of Jesus means nothing without genuine relationship with Jesus.

3. The Four Spheres of Authority

God has established delegated authority in multiple spheres of human life. Understanding and properly relating to these spheres is part of living in authority:

Sphere	The Authority	Its Purpose
Home/Family	Parents, spouse, household order	Protection of family; formation of children; modeling God's order in the smallest unit
Church	Spiritual leadership; elders and pastors	Equipping, spiritual covering, accountability, corporate direction
Marketplace	Employers, professional structures, vocational chains of command	Faithfulness in work; witness in the workplace; providing for needs
Government	Civil authority; laws; governing structures	Order in society; protection of citizens; justice

Romans 13:1 — 'There is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.' This does not mean all authority is good or that all who hold authority use it rightly. It means authority as a structure is God's idea, and our posture toward it matters.

4. The Umbrella — The Picture of Authority and Covering

A vivid illustration of what it means to be under authority: in prayer for a woman with chronic migraine headaches, a picture came — an umbrella with her head sticking out the top, and a foot coming down on it:

- The umbrella represents the covering of authority — God's order of protection for her life.
- Her head sticking out represented her operating outside that authority — taking on a role and engagement that was not hers, not assigned, not covered.
- She was driving past locations she disliked and cursing them daily. The problem: this was not an assignment God had given her. It was self-appointed activity outside her sphere.
- The insight: we can do things in God's name that God has not authorized. We can act in areas outside our assignment and find ourselves exposed — not under the covering of the authority we think we have.
- Jesus only did what He saw the Father do. He only said what He heard the Father say. The umbrella stays intact when we operate within our assignment.

5. Faith Required to Submit

One of the most counterintuitive insights of the series: it takes genuine faith to be under authority. Submission is not weakness — it requires trust in God:

- You cannot submit to another human being in a healthy way without trusting that God is above the person you are submitting to. Your faith is ultimately in God, not in the authority figure.
- Submitting to imperfect authority requires trusting that God works through imperfect structures — as He did with Daniel in Babylon, Samuel under Eli, David under Saul.
- The centurion was not submitting blindly — he was operating within a chain of command he trusted. When authority is exercised well, it is a place of protection, covering, and empowerment.
- The attitude toward authority is as important as the action. Even in difficult authority situations, the heart posture toward authority matters.

6. When to Draw the Line — Acts 4

Submission to authority has a limit. Acts 4 provides the example: the Sanhedrin commanded Peter and John not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. Their response is the pattern:

- 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' (Acts 4:19-20)
- They did not rebel, did not attack the authority, did not become bitter. They stated their position clearly and respectfully: we will not disobey God. You do what you must. We will do what we must.
- Then they gathered the community and prayed — for boldness, for signs, for the Spirit to continue moving. They didn't undermine the authority; they went to a higher Authority.
- The line: when authority commands you to do something contrary to God's Word or to stop doing something God has clearly called you to do — at that point, you respectfully submit to God over man.

Complete Series Summary

Session	Title	Core Focus
1	The Key to the Commission	Matthew 28:18 reread; all authority belongs to Jesus; the Great Commission is grounded in His authority; authority (exousia) vs. power (dunamis); Adam's lost authority, Jesus restores it

2	Jesus as the Model — Kingdom in Action	Matthew 4:23 and the kingdom ministry; church mentioned only twice; Lord's Prayer as a kingdom prayer; healing accounts in Matthew 8 and 9; He healed all who came
3	Do We Have Authority? — The Commission to the Twelve	Matthew 9:35-10:1; exousia given to the Twelve; the harvest and the laborers; Mark 16:15-18; the 70 return; Luke 10:17-19; authority over the enemy
4	The Church, the Keys, and the Victory	Matthew 16:13-19; Peter's revelation; the ekklesia; storming the gates; keys of the kingdom — binding and loosing; Ephesians 1 apostolic prayer; Revelation 5 — kings and priests on earth
5	The Extent and Limits of Our Authority	Ephesians 1:19-22 and 6:10-18; battle from victory; Jesus only did what He saw the Father do; the policeman illustration; not lone wolves; authority in concert with heaven
6	Authority Is a Relational Issue	Matthew 8:5-13 — the centurion; authority requires being under authority; faith to submit; four spheres of authority; the umbrella illustration; Acts 4 — when to draw the line

A Closing Word

Authority is not earned by spiritual achievement or generated by personal intensity. It flows from relationship — being in Christ, who has all authority in heaven and on earth. The centurion understood what many miss: you exercise authority because you are under authority.

Run to authority. Submit to the structures God has ordained. Operate within your assignment.

And know that God has placed in you — in His body, the ekklesia — more authority than you have been exercising.

The harvest is plentiful. The gates of Hades will not prevail. Go, in His name.

Final Reflection Questions



Reflection Questions

1. The centurion said 'I also am a man under authority' — and Jesus marveled at this as great faith. Being under authority is described here as an expression of faith, not a limitation. Does submission feel like faith to you, or does it feel like weakness? What

would it mean to reframe submission as one of the highest expressions of trust in God?

2. The umbrella illustration — operating outside your assignment removes the covering of authority. Are there areas of your life where you have been operating outside your assignment — doing things in God's name that He has not authorized you to do? What is the difference between what God has assigned to you and what you have taken on out of zeal or personal conviction?
3. The four spheres of authority — home, church, marketplace, government. Which sphere do you find it hardest to properly relate to? Where is your attitude toward authority most resistant or most compliant? Is the difficulty about the specific authority figures, or about authority as a principle?
4. Acts 4 — Peter and John drew the line when commanded to stop speaking in Jesus's name. They were respectful, clear, and prayerful. Is there a situation in your life where God is calling you to respectfully maintain your ground — where obedience to Him requires not complying with a human authority? How do you navigate that?
5. Looking back over the full series: What is the one insight about authority that has most changed or deepened your understanding? And what is the specific, practical step you are taking — this week, not someday — to walk more fully in the authority Jesus has given you?

Final Application

✓ Personal Application

1. Assess your current relationship with the four spheres of authority this week — home, church, marketplace, and government. For each one, honestly evaluate: is my posture toward this authority one of submission, trust, and faith? Or is there resistance, resentment, or rebellion? Bring what you find to God in prayer.
2. Identify your specific assignment — the sphere where God has authorized you to act, the people He has placed in your care, the domain where your authority is commissioned and covered. Write it down. Then ask: am I faithfully working within that assignment? Or am I operating outside it and wondering why the covering feels thin?
3. Pray this week for a revelation of being under authority — not just exercising it. Ask God to show you where being properly positioned under His authority, and under the human authority structures He has ordained, will change how your delegated authority operates.
4. Find one person this week who needs the Kingdom to come in their life — sick, in bondage, in need. Go to them. Pray for them. Exercise the authority you have been given. Not loud, not performative — quietly confident in the name of Jesus. Then trust the result to Him.
5. Write out Matthew 28:18-20 and put it somewhere you will see it every day this week. Before reading the commission ('Go therefore'), pause on verse 18 and receive it: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.' Let that be the ground you stand on every time you engage the world on behalf of the King.

Notes
