

## AUTHORITY THROUGH UNION

- A. Introduction: The night before Jesus was crucified He made the statement that in the world we will have tribulation, but we can be of good cheer because He has overcome the world (John 16:33). We are examining what Jesus meant by His statement and how it affects our lives.
1. Last week we talked about the fact that we can be of good cheer (encouraged, confident, certain) because Jesus, through His death and resurrection, has overcome death. II Tim 1:10
    - a. Death is the common, inescapable enemy of all humanity. God did not create anyone or anything (humans, animals, plants) to die. Death is in this world because of sin.
      1. When Adam (the first man) disobeyed God, corruption and death entered the human race as well as the entire material creation. Gen 2:17; Gen 3:17-19; Rom 5:12
      2. All life's hardships are expressions of death, because every problem and pain in this world is ultimately a consequence of sin—not necessarily your personal sin, but Adam's sin.
    - b. Jesus, through His resurrection victory over death, demonstrated that He is greater than every effect of sin and its resulting death. And, as believers in Him, we share in what He has done.
      1. Because we are born of God through faith in Christ, we are overcomers. We are conquerors, not because we can stop life's troubles from invading our lives, but because life's troubles can't stop God's ultimate purpose for us from coming to pass.
      2. God's ultimate purpose is to have us as His sons and daughters who will live with Him forever on this earth once it has been released from all corruption and death. Rev 21-22
        - A. In the world you will have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer—take courage, be confident, certain, undaunted—for I have overcome the world.—I have deprived it of the power to harm, have conquered it for you (John 16:33, Amp).
        - B. There is no such thing as a problem free, trouble free life in this fallen world. But Jesus, through His resurrection victory, has deprived the world of power to *permanently* harm us.
  2. Nothing can stop the future that God has in store for us from coming to pass. And, through Jesus, God is progressively reclaiming His creation from sin, corruption, and death. We have more to say tonight.
- B. Jesus made His statement about overcoming the world at what is commonly called the Last Supper (It was actually a Passover Meal). Jesus' twelve apostles were with Him at the table. At the conclusion of the meal Jesus took its two main elements—the unleavened bread and the wine—and applied them to Himself.
1. Matt 26:26-28—Jesus told them that the bread represented His body which would be broken for them, and the wine represented His blood which would be shed for them—all to provide remission, or the wiping out, of sin.
    - a. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus established a new relationship between God and man. His blood completely cleanses men and women from the guilt of sin that God can now indwell all those who put faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord.
    - b. Jesus' death and resurrection opened the way for men and women to receive the life and Spirit of God into their inward being and be restored to their created purpose as sons and daughters who are born of God. John 1:12-13; I John 5:1
  2. Jesus made one more statement about the cup He offered to His disciples: Mark my words—I will not drink wine again until I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom (Matt 26:29, NLT).
    - a. The word kingdom would have resonated with Jesus' apostles because, based on the writings of the Old Testament prophets, they were expecting God to establish His kingdom on earth and restore the world to pre-sin condition. Dan 2:44; Dan 7:27; Isa 51:3; Ezek 36:35; etc.
    - b. Jesus began His ministry three years earlier with these words: At last the time has come...the kingdom of God is near! Turn from you sins and believe this Good News (Mark 1:15, NLT). And

now, He informed His disciples that the next time we drink together will be in the kingdom.

1. Matt 16:28—A year earlier Jesus, told His disciples: I assure you that some of you standing here right now will not die before you see me, the Son of Man, coming in my kingdom (NLT).
  2. The prophet Daniel wrote that the Son of Man would come at the end of the age to judge the world and establish His unending kingdom on earth. Dan 7:13-14
3. Based on the writings of the Old Testament prophets, the people group into which Jesus was born (the Jews), was expecting the Lord to establish His visible, eternal kingdom on earth. However, the prophets weren't clearly shown that the visible kingdom of God on earth would be first preceded by God's invisible kingdom—the kingdom of God in the hearts of men through new birth.
- a. In one of Jesus' many encounters with the religious leadership of Israel, the Pharisees demanded that He tell them when the kingdom of God will come. Jesus answered that the kingdom of God does not come with outward show; it is within you. Luke 17:20-21
    1. The original Greek reads "it will not come with visible display". "For behold, the kingdom of God is within you (in your hearts) and among you (surrounding you)" (Luke 17:21, Amp).
    2. The Greek word translated kingdom means realm or rule. The kingdom within is the reign or rule of God in the hearts (inward being of spirit) of men through new birth.
  - b. When a person is born again (born from above, born of the Spirit) God by His Spirit and life comes to reign in them. God's domain or realm now extends into them. John 3:3-5
4. Because of Adam's sin and its affects, this world is not as God created or intended it to be. When Adam sinned, not only was humanity made subject to sin and death, and the entire material creation infused with the curse of death, the governmental structure of the world was also altered.
- a. Gen 1:26—When God created Adam and humankind in Adam, He gave them dominion (rule, reign) in the earth. God intended for men and women to be His under rulers in this world.
    1. Adam, through his disobedience to God and submission to the devil, delivered his God-given authority (his dominion over the earth) to the devil. And, the devil became the god (prince, evil genius, ruler) of the world. II Cor 4:4; John 12:31; John 14:30
    2. Luke 4:6—When Satan tempted Jesus by offering Him the power (the Greek word means dominion, authority, rule) and glory of the kingdoms of this world, it was a genuine offer because that authority was given over to the Devil by Adam: It is mine to give (NLT, TPT).
  - b. Adam's sin produced a fundamental change in human nature. Men and women became sinners by nature who display their fallen nature through sinful actions. Sinful people are dead or cut off from, separated from, the life in God and subject to the ruler of this world.
    1. The apostle Paul, while informing Christians of what they are because of what Jesus has done, reminded them they were once dead (cut off from God) because of their sins. Eph 2:1
      - A. Eph 2:2—You used to live just like the rest of the world, full of sin, obeying Satan, the mighty prince of the power of the air. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God (NLT).
      - B. Eph 2:2—You lived in the religion, customs, and values of this world, obeying the dark ruler of the earthly realm who fills the atmosphere with his authority, and works diligently in the hearts of those who are disobedient to the truth of God (TPT).
    2. Just a few days before Jesus died for our sins, made the statement that the prince of this world is cast out: John 12:31—From this moment on, everything in this world is about to change, for the ruler of this dark world will be overthrown (TPT).
      - A. Jesus, through His death and resurrection, broke the power of sin, Satan, and death over all those who believe on Him as Savior and Lord.
      - B. Heb 2:14-15—(Jesus took on a human nature) that by [going through death] He might bring to naught and make of no effect him who had the power of death, that is, the devil;

And also that He might deliver and completely set free all those who through the (haunting) fear of death were held in bondage throughout the whole course of their lives (Amp).

5. Jesus went to the Cross as our substitute. He was punished for our sins and died the death we should have died because of our sin. Divine Justice was satisfied in regard to our sin through Jesus. Isa 53:6
    - a. But there is more to what happened through Jesus' death and resurrection. Not only did Jesus go to the Cross for us, He went to the Cross as us.
      1. In the Bible we find something known as the principle of identification: I wasn't there but what happened there affects me as though I was there.
      2. For example: I wasn't in the Garden when Adam sinned, but what happened there (his act of disobedience which resulted in corruption and death) affects me as though I was there.
    - b. This principle also applies to Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. I wasn't there when Jesus died and rose again, but what happened there affects me as though I was there. Jesus went to the Cross for me as me. And, when I believed on Him, what He did for me as me went into effect in my life.
    - c. At the Cross, Jesus joined us in death to bring us out of death. Once our sin was paid for, because He had no sin of His own, death and the one who has the power of death could no longer hold Jesus and He rose up out of death for us as us. He defeated death and the devil for us as us.
- C. Acts 26:18—Paul the apostle was commissioned by Jesus to preach the gospel (the good news of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection) and to open men's eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.
1. The Greek word translated power means authority (*exousia*). Authority is delegated power, the right to exercise power. Paul used the same word when he wrote about the effect of Jesus' sacrifice on those who acknowledge Him and Savior and Lord.
    - a. Col 1:13—Paul wrote: For he (God) has rescued us from the one who rules in the kingdom of darkness and has brought us into the Kingdom of his dear Son (NLT); [The Father] has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Amp).
    - b. Satan and death have dominion only over those who are guilty of sin. Because of Jesus and His sacrifice at the Cross, we are no longer guilty of sin, since the debt we owed has been paid.
      1. Col 2:13—You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins (NLT).
      2. Col 2:14-15—He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross. In this way, God disarmed the evil rulers and authorities (unseen rulers of darkness). He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the Cross of Christ (NLT).
  2. Remember, Jesus joined us in death at the Cross to bring us out of death and into life. He died and rose for us as us, and when we believe on Him His work goes into effect for us.
    - a. Eph 2:4-6—But God is so rich in mercy and loved us so very much, that even while we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead (NLT). For he raised us from the dead along with Christ, and we are seated with him in the heavenly realms—all because we are one with (united to) Christ Jesus (Amp).
    - b. Seated with Him is a reference to the authority we have been given through union with Christ. In Eph 1:19-23 Paul made a lengthy statement about how and why believers share in Jesus' authority.
      1. v19-20—God, by His mighty power, raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in Heaven. Remember, Jesus humbled or lowered Himself when He went to the Cross for us as us. But once the price for our sin was paid Jesus was restored to His place of honor and authority, following the resurrection.

2. v21-23—Jesus was restored to this position of honor and authority because it is His rightful place. But He was also restored for our sake, so that we could share in His authority.
  - A. Eph 1:22-23—And God has put all things under the authority of Christ, and he gave him this authority for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is filled by Christ, who fills everything everywhere with his presence (NLT).
  - B. The New Testament doesn't use the word church in the sense of an organization. The word is used in a spiritual sense. The Greek word (*ekklesia*) means called out from. The term refers to those who have been called out of darkness and transferred or removed from the authority (power) of darkness through union with Christ.
3. Through union with Christ we're restored to the place of authority God gave man in Adam. Because we are in union with Jesus we can now act in His name, with His power and authority.
3. Jesus broke the devil's authority over men and women in His resurrection victory. Jesus did it for us as us, by paying for our sin. Satan and death have no authority over those who are no longer guilty of sin.
  - a. Col 2:14-15—He (Almighty God) canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross. In this way, God disarmed the evil rulers and authorities (unseen rulers of darkness). He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the Cross of Christ (NLT).
  - b. Through the Cross of Christ the process of recovering God's creation from the throws of sin, Satan, corruption, and death has begun.
    1. The devil is defeated and his power is broken, but he has not yet been subjugated (banished from all contact with God's family and the family home). That will happen in connection with Jesus' second coming and the establishment of God's visible kingdom on earth.
    2. Christians face life and all its challenges in union with Jesus. We are no longer under the devil's dominion. We face him, through union with Christ, as victors over a defeated foe.
4. My purpose in this lesson is not to do a detailed teaching on the authority that is ours through union with Christ, but to help you see what it means that Jesus has overcome the world—and what affect His victory has on us in our lives. The devil and his minions have no more claim on you than they have on Jesus.
  - a. Note what Jesus said earlier in the evening at the Last Supper: John 14:30—I will not talk with you much more for the prince (evil genius, ruler) of the world is coming. And he has no claim on Me—he has nothing in common with Me, there is nothing in Me that belongs to him, he has no power over Me (Amp).
  - b. Note what John the apostle (who was present at the Last Supper and was an eyewitness of the death and resurrection of Jesus) later wrote to Christians: I John 5:18—We know that those who have become part of God's family do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot get his hands on them (NLT).
- D. Conclusion: At the Last Supper Jesus told His apostles that He would not drink with them again until He did so in the kingdom of God. Jesus uttered those words on Thursday night. On Sunday morning (resurrection day), the way to the kingdom was opened.
  1. In one of Peter's later sermons he reported that Jesus ate and drank with His apostles after the resurrection, and the implication is that it happened on resurrection day (Acts 10:41-43). The invisible reign of God (the kingdom) came into the hearts (inner being) of Jesus' apostles on that day—and expanded rapidly in the following weeks and months and years (Luke 24:40-48; John 20:19-23).
  2. Because of what Jesus did, we are men and women of authority. Jesus broke the power of sin, death, and the devil through His resurrection victory, and nothing can stop God's ultimate plan for His family and the family home from coming to pass. Our future is bright! Much more next week.