

Lordship, Authority and Unity



Martin Francis

'To The Church in Corinth'

Did you ever wonder about that - like which church in particular? 'The Church of St Cephas' perhaps, or 'Apollos Community Church'? Or did he mean 'St Paul's on The Hill'. Are we talking about one huge mega-church or several churches ACTING like one church?

Hold that thought, we'll get to it later.

Jesus' Parable of The Talents (Matt 25:14-30) tells of a Master who entrusted his servants with great wealth, expecting them to act in his authority and to invest and multiply his money before he returned. Some did and triumphed, yielding great rewards and earning their master's favour. Others simply 'buried' the treasure, earning judgement instead.

Although the parable as presented relates to money, Christians often regard these talents as representing special abilities, and by the mid-14th century the word 'Talent' came to mean just that. Today we might think of an ability to preach, to sing or play an instrument, fashion balloon animals, or in my case to make websites, as a 'talent'. Worthy though such skills may be, are there other gifts we neglect to use in service to him?

I would contend that the most powerful of all of the gifts which God gives us, and arguably the most underused, is the power and authority he gives us in the Name of Jesus Christ. Here are some of Jesus' promises regarding this authority:

"I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power



of the enemy; nothing will harm you." (Luke 10:19)

"I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

(Matt 16:18-19)

Followers of Jesus have indeed been given great power and authority

"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 14:13)

Followers of Jesus have indeed been given great power and authority, even over the spiritual realm (see also Eph. 6:12), but is this alone enough to accomplish what God wants?

In Numbers 2 we hear of God's instructions for arrangement of the tribal camps that made up the Nation of Israel. Each tribe had a name, each was distinct, each had their own history, special skills and responsibilities, each even had their own structures of governance. But those twelve tribes marched out as one nation, in the power of the name of the Almighty Himself.

Effective? Consider the fall of Jericho:

God instructed Israel's entire army to walk around the city for six straight days, without speaking a single word, to the lonely accompaniment of seven trumpets, and derisive mocking

of the inhabitants of Jericho. On the seventh day - and at the exact moment appointed by God himself, ALL THE PEOPLE SHOUTED WITH ONE VOICE and the wall collapsed.

(Read about this in Joshua 6:1-20)

Jesus himself promised:

"If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them."

(Matt 18:19-20)

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I believe that this is key – two or more must first AGREE in order for this blessing to come.

Just imagine the combined effect we could have for the Kingdom of God if two or three entire CHURCHES stood together.

Here's another example of believers acting as one, from Acts this time:

"[T]he apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas."

(Acts 15:22)

The problem is that in some towns that itself would require a minor miracle. Some places have many churches, each with their own agenda, several of whom would refuse even to sit in the same room, never mind wage spiritual warfare together. No wonder the enemy has us believing we are defeated before we begin!

Is there an alternative?

Back to Jesus again:

"Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand"

(Matt 12:25)

So it appears not.

No-one pretends that working together is easy. It requires sacrifices – a sacrifice of control being chief among them. But just imagine if your church would

team up with the other churches in your town under ONE banner, and stand together united under the Lordship of Christ himself... I wouldn't want to bet on the other guy.

The funny thing is, this could all start with YOU, dear reader.

And this brings me to my parting challenge...

Remember that 'Church in Corinth', the one I'm sure that was comprised of every group of believers who met in Christ's name? Well will you now follow their example, take up your God-given authority and humble yourself to serve alongside your brothers and sisters in the church next door? Perhaps next you could all put on your 'Church of (your town here)' T-shirts? That's a great start.

Now will you walk together and pray as ONE, with authority, for God's Kingdom to come to every street, classroom, hospital ward and local business that each of you can name?

Remember that victory belongs to the Lord, so let's thank him that He slows down just enough to allow the likes of us to work together, with Him, to forcefully advance His kingdom in the town that you are all blessed to call 'home'.

Martin Francis will be at the "Ecclesiact" stand (GF8) at Mission-Fest Toronto April 12-14th if you'd like to stop by for a chat. Email martin@ecclesiact.com or follow Twitter @ecclesiact

