

LETTER TO LEADERS

BY

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Dear Friend:

WHAT ABOUT AUTHORITY?

One of the central issues concerning leadership has to do with authority. Authority certainly is an essential element in leadership. The question is not should a leader have authority or not have authority. The Word of God makes it clear that a leader does have, even must have authority, in order to fulfill their leadership calling and position.

AUTHORITY FOR WHAT?

That question is not "Should we have authority?" The Biblical question is, "Authority for what?"

We find the answer to this question in our old friend "The Parable of the Sower." However, we cannot stop with just the parable itself, but we must follow the teaching of the Holy Spirit through the entire book of Mark, for it is the gospel of authority.

WHY MARK?

Why did the Holy Spirit use Mark to record the gospel of authority? Remember, John Mark was with Paul and Barnabas on the Isle of Cyprus when Paul turned and ministered blindness to Barjesus, a sorcerer. Mark did not understand this exercise of authority. It troubled him so much that he left the two and returned home.

For years Mark surely meditated on this use of authority. He prayed and studied. The Spirit of the Lord taught him and prepared him to write his gospel of authority.

SATAN CHALLENGED JESUS

In Mark 1:12-13 Satan challenged or tempted Jesus in the wilderness immediately after Jesus was baptized by John. In Mark 1:15 Jesus preaches "...the kingdom of God is at hand." The word kingdom literally means "dominion of the king". In this case the king is God. Dominion is area of authority. Jesus was saying "...the area of authority of God is now here." **AUTHORITY OVER DEMONS** In Mark 1:23-27 we find Jesus taking authority over the unclean spirit in the man in the synagogue.

AUTHORITY OVER SICKNESS

In Mark 1:29-34 we find Jesus taking authority over sickness in Peter's mother-in-law.

AUTHORITY OVER SIN In Mark 2:1-5 we find Jesus exercising authority over sin in the paralyzed man, and he was healed.

AUTHORITY OVER TRADITION

In Mark 2:21-25 we find Jesus taking authority over the tradition that the Pharisees had held to.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER

We find these same four areas of authority taught by Jesus in the Parable of the Sower. For the wayside soil, Jesus took authority over Satan. For the stony ground, Jesus took authority over sickness and persecution. For the thorny ground, Jesus took authority over things which produce sin; cares of the world, deceitfulness of riches, and lust of other things. For the good ground soil, Jesus does not tell us what would come against it. But as we read on through the book of Mark we find that the tradition of the elders is the enemy. (Mark 7:5)

AUTHORITY TO CORRECT

As I read through the gospels, I find authority to correct given to leaders as well (Mt 18:15-20)

AUTHORITY TO CONTROL

What I do not find in the New Testament is authority to prevent problems. Oh, how we leaders desire to have authority to prevent problems. It would make life for us so much easier. We must however, understand that if we have control over people, we are their lord. We are not called to be their lord.

We are called to exercise authority over Satan to take people out of his kingdom and deliver them into the kingdom of God; put them under God's authority. Oh, how our hearts break to see people heading for problems. We have the answer for them but they will not listen to us. If we just had authority to control we could save them so much heart ache. It is true. But that is not the way God designed it to work. Everyone must have Jesus as their Lord. Everyone must learn to walk after the Holy Spirit, not after our New Testament law of rules and regulations, however good they may be.

AUTHORITY WORKS BY LOVE

Any wisdom we might have to help people will only help them when they receive it. They will only receive it when they have enough confidence in us as leaders to ask of us. They will only ask when the love of God is apparent in our lives. People must know that we are for them and not against them.

AUTHORITY WITHOUT LOVE MAKES FEAR

Whenever Jesus exercised authority it produced fear in those around him until they realized that His authority was for them and not against them. (Mk 1:27, amazed; Mk 4:41, feared; Mk 5:33, feared).

Yes, leaders have delegated authority, even as the disciples have authority. We must exercise it in love to deliver people from Satan's kingdom. We cannot yield to the temptation to control with our authority, lest we put people under the bondage of our authority. We are called to set people free under the dominion of God.

Sincerely

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