

# **From Victory to Victory**

*By Bobby Schuller*

A fair warning! We are going to be really, honestly, we're going to be digging into the Bible a lot this morning on a subject that can seem abstract but is so important and I think has been missed by many in the church. This is something that if you can wrap your head around it, if you can get a vision for it, if you can work towards it, I promise you your life will never be the same again. If you understand what the scriptures are about to teach us this morning about spiritual authority, which is exactly what you have and how to operate and walk in that, your life will never, ever be the same.

Today we're finishing the series on Your Best is Yet to Come. We've talked a lot about dreaming big, but we've also talked about paying a price – what it means to walk the narrow road, of what it means to be training your soul as a disciple, what it means to take up your cross for the prize.

And today I want to finish with talking about faith, but not just faith in terms of trust the way we typically talk about it, but faith in operating in the spirit with spiritual authority. That word authority is not a word we American's like very much, is it! Especially if you're Bobby Schuller. I have always been an anti-authority figure. I remember I had this.. my poor French teacher in high school. I feel so bad. I teased her

like when we picked a name, I'm going off the road here, but everybody had to pick a name. My name is Martine, my name is Robert, and I picked Flotsam from Little Mermaid. It was the only French word I knew. She's like well Flotsam means fish. I'm like that's my name. And it was that kind of thing because she was so dry and she was so authoritarian, and the more she liked turned her authority up, the more rebellious I got.

And that's how many of us are, right? I mean like especially as Americans, there is this anti-authority independence thing. So when we talk about exercising authority or submitting to authority, it's something that makes us really uncomfortable. But it is a vital part of the kingdom of God. And it is actually at the core of what it means to walk by faith. To walk by faith means that you act in the authority of scripture, in the authority of the covenant that God's given us, and you act with authority over darkness, spiritual darkness in our world.

So this is a little bit of a deeper message today, and I hope you stick with me because I think it'll change your life. You have authority. You have spiritual authority in the range of your affective will. It is your life and your kingdom to pray, to act with boldness and power!

Recently my friend Ed Stetzer, he's an editor for Christianity Today and he's the executive chairman for the Billy Graham Foundation, he Tweeted this out: "Threw my back out. X-rays and treatment on Friday and too many drugs since then. Now asking for prayer. Not the weak

Lord if it be thy will, heal Ed's back, prayer. Nope! I'm looking for the God! We're believing you to heal Ed's back spirit filled kind. Please! Now!"

Now here's the thing, as Christians, when we are backed into a corner, we all feel that way. Why? When we have no place else to go, we don't want the guy who's going to be oh Lord on high, blessed be thy name. I pray to thee on behalf of mine beloved brother Chad. You know? You know if it's like praying over your wedding or something, fine, but if you really; you know like it's something ceremonial. But if it matters, weddings matter. If it's like something, like I'm going to die unless I get healed, you don't want that guy, the holy hand grenade of Antioch guy praying over you. You want someone like that. You want someone who as Jesus said, is going to be banging on his neighbors' door. You want the woman who goes before the unjust judge and pleads. You want someone who prays with passion, with power, and with authority. Why do we want someone like that in our lives, but we don't want to be that way ourselves?

I remember when we lived in Tulsa, we went to a church for a long time, and we had something like that where a member of our family got sick, and we were like well we need to take her to the church and pray, and my mom was like no, we're not going to our church to pray, we're going to Victory, a charismatic church. They know how to pray. They pray like that. We need someone who prays like that.

So here's what I'm saying. Too often as Reformed or Presbyterian people, it's easy to be like oh that's what Pentecostals do. That's what charismatic's do. Or that's how people in the mission field pray. Well yes. Because they know they're in a spiritual battle and we've forgotten.

Look, it's important that we understand that God has given us authority to pray with power and with faith. To proclaim, to proclaim over the world goodness.

So we shouldn't be timid about our faith. We shouldn't be timid about the kingdom of God. We shouldn't be timid about God's promises. We should be bold. Be bold, be strong, right? God has not given you a spirit of fear, but He's given unto us what? A spirit of what? Power! And of love! And He's given us a sound mind. We don't have to be afraid, we don't have to be timid, we need to know God's word, we need to hear His voice, and we need to live and operate in spiritual authority. This is important. And this is so very often what Jesus is trying to teach His disciples. To act in that authority. This is what He's trying to teach us, too.

I had a pastor once that explained it this way, and it was a great analogy. He said it like this: here in Southern California, almost all of us, we power our house through Edison, right? The electric company. And Edison has done everything they need to do to make sure your house has electricity. All the wires are going, all the laws are in place so that your house' electricity can be on, and all of those things, the price has been

paid, right? You've paid your bill. Like all of those things are right, and your house could still be dark. Right? All the electricity, it's going to your house and what do you have to do? Well you merely have to flip the switch on.

But imagine someone went to his house and the switch was off and he called Edison and said excuse me, sir, the electric's not working in my house. I need you to send somebody over to turn the switch on. Well what would they say to you? I guarantee they would say sir, we don't do that. We've given everything you need. The power is going to your house. Turn the switch on!

And this is very much what Jesus has tried to teach His disciples, to get this new mindset. You have everything you need. You know God's will, it's in His word. Operate according to it and turn the switch on. That's what it means to walk by faith, friends.

It looks like this. In scripture, and look, again, authority, right? Spiritual authority. In the scripture, that word authority, rules, sovereignty, it's in right from the beginning, all through the pages of the Bible. You see this movement of spiritual authority. Victories and losses. And it begins by God administering His authority to Adam and Eve. God created mankind; I'm reading this from the scriptures of Genesis chapter one. So God created mankind in whose image? God's image, right? God's power, God's life, God's joy. "In His own image, the image of God, He created them. Male and female, He created them. God blessed them and

said to them, ‘be fruitful and increase in number. Fill the earth’” and what? “Subdue it.” And then what? “Rule over. Rule over it. The fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Then later in chapter two, He says “the Lord took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden” to do what? “To work it” and to what? “And to care for it.” So you see that God gives Adam and Eve what? Authority to rule, to rule, right? With power, with God’s authority over His creation, to co-create, probably to make new things, to be fruitful and to multiply. Why? For their ego? No, right. For the benefit of creation. God gave Adam and Eve authority over creation for the benefit of creation. This is why we have spiritual authority. It’s not for our benefit. It’s for the benefit of others. It’s for the benefit of creation. We need to take spiritual authority, in a very spiritually dark world. For the benefit of others.

That power, that authority that was given to Adam and Eve, they willfully gave that over to the serpent in the garden when they sinned. And death reigned from then until Christ. And this is what Paul says in Romans five, he’s talking about this, and it’s of course all over the New Testament, but it says “nevertheless death” what? What’s the word there? “Reigned.” Death had authority, death had power, death was on the throne, right? “From the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command as Adam did who is a pattern of the one to come. But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the

many died by the trespass of the one man,” that’s talking about the fall, right? Because of Adam’s sin. “How much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by grace of but one man Jesus Christ overflowed to many.” Paul is talking about Jesus the new Adam, that that authority that Adam gave over to the serpent, Jesus took it back! And He gave it to us! When we operate in Jesus’ name, we operate in His authority.

And it’s interesting, if you look for it when you read the gospels, you just see over and over how much Jesus is trying to teach this idea of authority, spiritual authority, of the authority of good over evil to His disciples and wanting them to live by faith in that authority.

Great example of that is the story of the Centurion. Remember the Centurion? Comes to Jesus, his servant is sick, and he says Lord, my servant is paralyzed. I need you to heal him, and Jesus says take me to him, and he says I’m not worthy to have you under my roof. Keep in mind, this is not a Jewish man, this is not a Christian man, he’s a pagan, okay? I’m not worthy to have you under my roof. He’s a Centurion, it’s like a colonel.

And he says to Jesus, I am a man of what? Do you remember the word? Authority. I am a man of authority and I have men under me and I am under others. I tell this one go and he goes, and I tell this one come and he comes, I tell this servant do it and he does it. You don’t need to come to my house. He says to Jesus, just simply say the word and it will be so. And you remember what Jesus says? I’ve never seen greater faith

in all of Israel than this man. What does that say? So much of faith is about understanding authority over darkness. You have authority. Pray like it! Act like it! Think like it! Train your mind and your spirit according to God's word to move in power.

And this, of course, is when.. I wanted to read Matthew 17. So by the way, you guys know my son has epilepsy. And I just want to say this scripture, it's not saying that people have epilepsy are demon possessed, but rather that this boy was suffering from seizures because Satan had authority over his life.

So Jesus has been trying to teach His disciples to work in authority, to operate in authority according to Him, according to the kingdom of God. And it says.. Matthew 17:14, "when they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before Him. 'Lord, have mercy on my son,' he said. 'He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. I brought him to your disciples but they could not heal him.'" And the Greek says that Jesus literally went (SIGHS). It's right there. Right there in the Greek.

Now when He's talking, He's not talking to the man, He's talking to His students. "You unbelieving and perverse generation. How long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me.' Jesus rebuked the demon and it came out of the boy, and he was healed at that moment. Then the disciples came to Jesus," what, in public? No, because they're embarrassed. "In private, and they asked,

‘why couldn’t we drive it out?’ He replied, ‘because you have so little faith.’”

First of all, this verse is sort of about healing, but it’s not. It’s really about spiritual authority, isn’t it. Having authority over the demonic, having authority over evil to remove it. He said “truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain move from here to there.” Notice how you can say to this mountain, Lord I pray that you move this mountain. Lord, I just ask it to be your will. I don’t mean to mock you, but look He says you just say to it MOVE! “Move from here to there and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

If we have faith, Jesus says nothing will be impossible to us. This is the word of God. Its either true or it isn’t! Its either true or it isn’t. We must become the kinds of people who understand that we live in a physical world, influenced by spiritual things, and we have spiritual authority. God wants to work in your life. You may be scared, you may be timid, you may be pinned in a corner, stop looking for someone to pray for you like this and start praying this way yourself. Stop trying to find a man of God to help you, and become a man of God. Stop trying to find a woman of God to intercede on your behalf and become the woman of God you were created to be. Act in spiritual authority today! Stop waiting! Believe the word of God! Act according to it! Command! He’s

given you the authority to do it. And learn to hear the voice of the shepherd.

This is the piece that is also so important. As we train and study the scriptures and pray and spend time in the spirit, we begin to hear clearly God's voice. And when we do, and we hear God's voice clearly, it becomes easier to operate in authority because we know what He said. When we study scriptures and memorize them, we begin to bring it into our bones. We know what it says and we begin to act with faith, rather than guessing. You don't have to guess. It's right here. When the Bible is read, God's voice is heard. When the Bible is read aloud, God's voice is heard audibly. Believe it.

So who wants to live this way? I know I do. Here's some things we can do. The first and the most important thing, and you're going to hate what I'm about to say. It's not going to be the last thing you're going to hate what I'm going to say today, by the way.

The first thing is you got to learn to live under authority yourself. The Centurion man, what did he say? I have men under my authority, but what else? I myself am also under authority. The Centurion didn't have authority because he was so tough, he had authority because he knelt to Caesar. We have authority because we kneel before the throne of God. If we are not submitted to the authority of the kingdom of God in our lives, we don't have authority around us. It doesn't mean that you have to be perfect. We live by grace, right? But we still should strive

humbly in light of God's grace to live holy lives, and to do our best. We should not blatantly live in iniquity constantly pretending like everything's fine. We should really desire to be under God's authority.

It's kind of like that Bob Dillon song, 'you gonna have to serve somebody.' Anybody you know? Look you're under authority whether you know it or not. 'It may be the devil or it may be the Lord. But you know you gotta serve somebody.' That doesn't sound like Bob Dillon. But he was right, man. Actually, Bob Dillon was a believer; I think he was a believer when he did that, wasn't he? I think he'd just gotten saved. Anyway.

It's kind of like this. It's like sometimes we think oh I've sinned and I've made a mistake and now God's blessing has been removed from me. So we think it just kind of goes away, but I think a big part of this, it's almost like an ATM card. You ever been traveling internationally and you lose your ATM card? You have a bank, maybe with some money in it, but you lost your card, you lost access to that money. It's not that the money got wiped away, or stolen or disappeared, you just can't access it. I think that's what happens when we are living in rebellion against God, when God is pressing something on our heart to change and we refuse and we continue to walk in rebellion towards what we know is right in our lives. It's like losing that ATM card. God's not going to, like, take all your cash in that scenario, but you are going to lose access to it so get your card back, okay?

And then living under authority, I don't mean just under authority to God, I also mean that you need incarnational representations of that in your life, as well. I am not a good enough person to keep myself accountable. I need people in my life to hold me accountable. So do you. That's why one of the first things I did when we came to lead this church was insist that we have a real board, not a rubber stamp board. A real board – six men and women who love the Lord. They can fire me anytime, anytime they want. And the decisions I make on behalf of this church are scrutinized by that board. And of course we're all friends, we love each other very much, but that system is there to keep me and to keep our team honest, and to submit to that team.

And I also have multiple mentors, but one in particular, Bill Gaultiere who keeps me accountable and asks me how are you doing? Are you working too hard? Do you put your family first? Is there sin in your life? Are you seeking God with all your heart? Submitting to authority; finding people that you submit to willingly that you want to speak to gives you authority. The authority you have is from on high, so when we submit to that authority, we gain authority, as well. That make sense? So do that! It'll be good for you. All right?

Pray bigger. No more weakling prayers. Pray! And when you pray, mean it! Pray with faith, pray with confidence. Be the kind of person you want to pray for you and pray that way every day with authority, with power. With faith, believe.

I remember, now this is not a suggestion, but I told you guys not long ago, one of the first miracles I ever saw in Thailand, I was 15-years-old, I actually turned 16 while I was there, and there was a girl who was the leader of our little group. Her name was Becky. She was 18. And you have to understand, when I'm 15 that sounds really old. An 18-year-old is an adult. She can vote, she can be in the military; this is a big deal. Anyway, so she was kind of our spiritual leader of the group, but looking back as an adult, I'm like she was still a child. And what's amazing about this story is we were sharing our faith in this market with a man who had never walked before, and he was there I think either with his father or uncle or something, and he had walked, but he hadn't walked for ten years. He had some injury and he was unable, so he would drag himself around this room.

Anyway, she looks at him as we're witnessing, and she says, we're about to pray for you, and God is going to heal you. And if God doesn't heal you, there is no God and His word is not true. And I was like what? So I'm not suggesting you pray this way, but I was like what are you saying? And it's like there's nobody in this room except her and this guy, and she goes to lay hands on him. She said dear God, and as she begins to pray, that's when she's healed. He doesn't finish, it's like the second she touches him, he like stands up, says something in Thai, and like freaks out, and starts running and disappears. And like this guy, his dad or whoever, he started talking all through translator, we can't

understand it. But that kind of a prayer, don't ever pray that way, by the way, but there's something admirable about that, isn't there? The boldness.

Now I actually believe this was someone who.. Becky, her name was Becky, she was so, so radically, like so sold out for the Lord. Her whole life was the Lord. And I just believe she heard that. I think that God wanted her to say that because the Lord wanted that miracle to be a testimony to that man that Easter really happened.

God is sovereign. He doesn't always do everything we want. He's in control. He is sovereign. You don't have to remind Him. He knows. You don't have to say God you're sovereign before you pray. He knows. Command things when you pray. Remember when Peter raised the man who was at the gate called beautiful in Acts chapter 3. Remember how he prayed for that man? "Silver and gold have I not. Rise up and walk." He just commanded it. He just said rise up and walk. That's how Jesus healed people. Walk. See. Be gone. Be healed.

I feel like in spirit we're missing that bit in the way we pray. That's how the Lord wants us to pray. And when you pray for people, that's how they want you to pray for them, too, by the way. Amen? Okay, so pray bigger. Believe the word of God. It's true.

Number three, act bigger. When you know you're supposed to do something on behalf of the Lord, whatever it is, don't do it half baked. Just do it a hundred percent or just don't do it. And if you're timid, if

you're afraid, it's a great opportunity to grow in the aspect of your life. There's another thing you guys are going to hate. If you don't have the courage or the heart to do it in a big way, just fake it. Fake it! Just fake it. This is cognitive behavior therapy. They teach people who struggle with anxiety, depression to fake it till they make it. So you act as though the scriptures are true, act as though it's from the Lord, and that will train you to be braver. Maybe you're going something in your life and you know you have to do something you don't want to do. Do it and do it a hundred percent.

And that's my last thing. That's a reminder of this whole series, and that is give big. Give really big. And when I say give, I'm not talking about donations, although for some of you that might be exactly what it is. When I mean give bigger, I mean give it a thousand percent. Jesus wants it all. He wants everything. He wants your whole heart. Pour yourself completely into whatever it is you're doing. The cross itself is the greatest symbol of generosity ever. It was a gift. The greatest gift ever given. So to take up our cross and follow Christ means that there's a sacrifice that's a blessing to others.

So take up your cross. Follow Him. Pay the price. Go the extra mile. Do what you need to do to go all the way on the narrow road. And I promise you, if you do that, give yourself grace. Give yourself mercy. Don't be hard on yourself. No shame. Don't beat yourself up. You're doing better than you think, but keep going. Do bigger, pray bigger, and

believe and operate in spiritual authority. If you have depression, anxiety, if you have fear, just take authority over that stuff, and if you have people in your life who are suffering, when you pray for them, pray with authority and watch as you see that the Holy Spirit works through those moments and you begin to see the Lord even doing miracles in your life. It's a wonderful thing.

Lord, we love you. And we thank you that you've given us authority. That as we live every moment in the kingdom of God, as we live according to your word, as we walk in the spirit, we thank you, Lord, that we can do everything that you've called us to do. So we pray that you give us faith, and we love you, it's in Christ' name we pray, amen.