

The Delegated Authority of Jesus

Many positions of authority in our world are positions of delegated authority. That means that the person doesn't have any particular authority in him or herself but only carries authority as long as he or she holds to a certain position.

A President of a democratic country has authority over the country as is given to him by parliament. A cabinet minister has authority as long as he holds the position of minister. A traffic cop has authority as long as he wears the uniform.

In all these cases authority was delegated to the person from a higher authority.

Let us look at the delegated authority of Jesus.

John 5: 16 – 30

1) Jesus referred to Himself as being equal with God

- One of the biggest controversial issues of Jesus' ministry was His insistence on healing the sick and doing other miracles on the Sabbath.
 - He had just healed a man who had been an invalid for 38 years.
 - The Jews were angry not only because he healed the man on the Sabbath but also that he told the man to pick up his bed and walk on the Sabbath.
 - Either Jesus was very thick skinned and insensitive or He was asserting His authority in a way that got everyone's attention.
 - We certainly know that He wasn't thick skinned and insensitive.
 - He was challenging the religious status quo of His day to demonstrate what God really intended when He gave the law to His people. And being God Himself He knew very well what that intention was.
- In Matthew 12: 1 – 14 we see Jesus' disciples picking grain and eating it on a Sabbath and the Pharisees condemned them to Jesus saying that they were doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath. Jesus defends them and ends by saying that 'the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath' He then goes on to heal a man in the synagogue further infuriating the Pharisees so that they plotted to kill him.
 - The term "Son of Man" was used in Daniel 7: 13 – 14 "'In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.
 - Thus Jesus was equating Himself with God.
- Some other references of Jesus' claim to deity:
 - John 5: 58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" (Ref. Exodus 3: 14)
 - Luke 22: 70 They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied, "You are right in saying I am."
 - Luke 4: 8 Jesus answered, "It is written: `Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.' "
 - John 20: 28 – 29 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."
 - Note that Jesus never rejected Thomas's worship. He accepted it.

2) The interdependence between Jesus and the Father

- Jesus attributed His actions to His relationship with the Father. He was basically saying that the work of the Father and the Son are the same as they are of the same essence and purpose.
- What does it mean that the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees the Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does?
 - It is not that Jesus does not have the power or capacity to work on His own but rather that the Father and Son are so relationally intertwined that they will only work in agreement with the other.
 - This is based on the Father's love for the Son (v.20)
 - When a husband and wife love each other the one won't go and draw a lot of money from their spouses account, even if he/she has power of attorney on it, and go and spend it without full agreement of the other.
 - There is a unity of spirit and purpose that the one will say "I cannot do this on my own without the other".
 - There is an interdependence to fulfil a purpose
- Jesus was dependent on the Father to accomplish the work that the Father gave him to do
- On the other hand the Father was dependent on Jesus to actually do that work.
- God had come to earth as a man – the Son – to accomplish the will of God.
 - As a man Jesus was dependent on the Father for all his resources.
 - The Father was dependent on Jesus, as a man, to accomplish the will of God that only a man could accomplish.
- In order for Jesus to accomplish that work He needed authority to be delegated to Him.

3) The delegated authority of Jesus

- We have seen what it means to have had authority delegated to a person.
 - But does that mean that the person who has had authority delegated to him is lesser or a lower rank or lower on the authority level than the one who has delegated the authority.
 - Not necessarily. An executive board of a company may delegate a certain task to a specific member of the board who has specific skills to accomplish that task.
 - The fact that Jesus has had authority delegated to Him does not make Him lesser or inferior to the Father.
- Matthew 28: 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me"
- What specific authority has been delegated to Jesus:
 - Judgment
 - The Father judges no one but has entrusted all judgement to the Son (v. 22)
 - The Father has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man (v. 27)
 - The time of judgment is coming (v 25)
 - Jesus is the just judge. He judges in collaboration with the Father and not on His own.
 - When He judges He seeks to please the Father and not himself (v.30)
 - To have life in himself – v. 26
 - As the Father has life in himself he has granted the Son have life in himself
 - The Son give life by the His word – by his voice(v.24 - 25)
 - John 17: 2 "For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him"
 - Over death (John 10: 17 – 18)
 - The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life--only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.

- To forgive sins
 - Luke 5: 20 – 25 When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven." The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?"²³ Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"²⁴ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."²⁵ Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God
- To teach the truths of God
 - Luke 4: 32 "They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority."
- Over sickness and demons
 - Luke 4: 36 "With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!"
- The reason that the Father has delegated authority to the Son
 - That all may honour the Son as they honour the Father – Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father (v. 23)

Jesus' teaching was a response to His authority being brought into question when He healed a man on the Sabbath.

He said "My Father is always at work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

Are you questioning Jesus' authority and work in you lives or in the church? Or are you convinced that He has all authority?

If it is true that He has all authority then we need to devote our lives to Him that He may be Lord and God in them.