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ME

When questioned about our commission, many of us readily quote the Lord's instructions in Mt 28:19-20, to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." But if we study this quote carefully, we would notice that it is conditional and dependent on the preceding verse 18 - because "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me", [namely, Jesus], "go therefore and make disciples of all nations ..."

In our service to God, we may encounter seemingly insurmountable obstacles from within and without; and even receive threats to our very lives. We need strength. But living amidst great social and economic progress, we may have forgotten the source of our strength.

*How Did Jesus Receive
Such Authority?*

If we study the four Gospels, we would realise that Jesus only indicated the presence of such authority after His resurrection. Why? The apostle Paul provided the answer in the Phil 2:5-11 when he described how the Lord Jesus "though in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men."

Not only that, even as a human being, He humbled Himself to the extent that He was willing to die on the cross for humanity. Because of this, God exalted Him and bestowed upon Him a name "above every name" At this name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."

The Lord Jesus has taught us a lesson in humility and service. If the church wishes to progress and experience the power and authority of God, her members must learn from Jesus and serve with humility. It is not sufficient for members to be equipped with biblical knowledge or possess great academic knowledge and good social standing. What is important is that their daily actions and their church participation manifest the lowliness and humility of Christ.

This biblical teaching may well go against the very essence of secular leadership skills. To develop the latter, we are encouraged to be assertive, to always speak our mind and to do things our way. But in the church, if we truly wish to serve God and want Him to accept our service, we have to be humble and to acknowledge that we are but unworthy servants who are only discharging our duty (Lk 17:10). After all, the authority rests with Jesus and not with us.

The early workers understood this principle. That was why God worked with them and manifested His authority through them. Consider the healing at the Beautiful Gate. Peter knew that it was Jesus who had the authority to heal the lame man

(Acts 3:6, 12-16). Rightly so, he credited the miracle to Jesus. In Acts 4, we see how Peter and John boldly defended their healing of the cripple; Peter proclaimed the sovereignty of Jesus, stating categorically that "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). His audience was clearly astonished by such courageous words from an uneducated fisherman. Peter's recognition of God had given him the courage to defend his faith.

In Acts 5:29-32, we see again how the faith of the apostles gave them great courage and strength to stand by their conviction, despite fierce opposition from the religious leaders of that time. Peter's defiant statement "we must obey God rather than men" could have cost him his life. But he knew that life was in God's hands; even if he were killed, surely God would receive him in the heavenly home. So, he continued to boldly preach the gospel all the days of his life.

From the episode of Bar-Jesus the magician, Paul's response shows that he too had this recognition. He rebuked the magician saying "the hand of the Lord is upon you ..." (Acts 13:11). The episode of the slave girl in Acts 16:16-18 also reveals Paul's acknowledgement of God's authority.





It is important that in our service to the Lord we have the same recognition as these early workers. Otherwise we would become demotivated whenever we face difficulties in our ministry; and develop inferior complexes, thinking that we are not eloquent, lack secular education and the necessary leadership skills. These factors are not critical. What is critical is our faith towards God. If we truly believe that the Truth is given by God who has the sovereign authority, then we will know that He will give us strength. In many cases, church progress is hindered not because we lack the ability, but because we fail to believe in God's power and authority. This is one obstacle that everyone needs to overcome.

Think of the people of Israel in their rebuilding of the temple. The older generation wept when they saw the wilderness that was the site for the second temple. Surely it paled in comparison the grandeur of King Solomon's temple. But the Lord encouraged them to work and reminded them that He was the Lord of the universe and promised them that the "latter splendour of this house shall be greater

than the former" (Hag 2:9). All they had to remember was that work was accomplished "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit" (Zech 4:6).

Today in our service, we may form committees and hold many meetings but what is more important is our ability to rely on God, our recognition that spiritual warfare requires spiritual weapons, that God's work should not be accomplished by man's methods but by God's power.

Paul's life of ministry was not an easy one (2 Cor 4). Yet towards the end, he revealed to Timothy the secret of his successful missionary life: "the Lord stood by me and gave me strength" (2 Tim 4:17). No one, including Paul himself, could have physically seen that Jesus was with him. But Paul knew, because he walked his life "by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7). Since Jesus was with him, he could do all things in Christ who strengthened him (Phil 4:13). In our life of service, we need to possess such faith too. We in the True Jesus Church are the Christian soldiers of the end time. We must be equipped with such faith to be able to launch out into the world to fight the good fight for Him. As we journey through our life of faith, we have to constantly remind ourselves of Jesus' assurance that "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me." Since we have been chosen by Him, what is there for us to fear?

*Adopted from a sermon by
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