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Family Altar Newsletter

Roloff Evangelistic Enterprises

By What Authority?

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If ever I've let you enter the secret of my tabernacle and be exposed to the innermost recesses of my soul, it will have to be in this particular message. The Christian becomes a misfit and misunderstood as soon as he steps over into the will of God. For too long we've let the devil and tradition and the world bind God's people—we must be set free!

I've preached in many churches and many jails, and I believe both places offer a glimpse of where our country is headed. This week has helped me reach some tearful conclusions about the future of our irreverent and ungrateful nation. Our future will be shaped by one question, and I believe it is a very old question: "Who has the authority?"

In Matthew 21:23-27, Jesus is asked where His authority came from. But after refusing to answer where John's baptism had come from, the chief priests and elders silently retreated into their fancy offices of blind hypocrisy. What Jesus was saying was that He got His authority from the same place John got his authority, and that was from heaven. To soften the ministry of John the Baptist for those unwilling to change their minds would have been to compromise Heaven's authority (Matthew 21:32).

I've been asked: "Lester, why don't you compromise a little? It's for the best." This question is asked because of spiritual ignorance. Compromise is the killer. My only authority as God's servant is to do His work the way He wants it done (Mark 13:34).

In Luke chapter 4, we see Jesus pick up the Book of Isaiah and bring His first message (v14-22). The people at the synagogue in Nazareth rejected Jesus' commentary on the ministry of Elijah and Elisha (v23-30) because they were hearing it from the mouth of "Joseph's son." Nazareth "wondered at the gracious words," but rejected His authority. Hearts were warmer in Capernaum. The people were "astonished at His doctrine: for His word was with power," and they were amazed by His power and authority (v32,36). This chapter of great deliverance and healing ends with a powerful emphasis: "I must preach."

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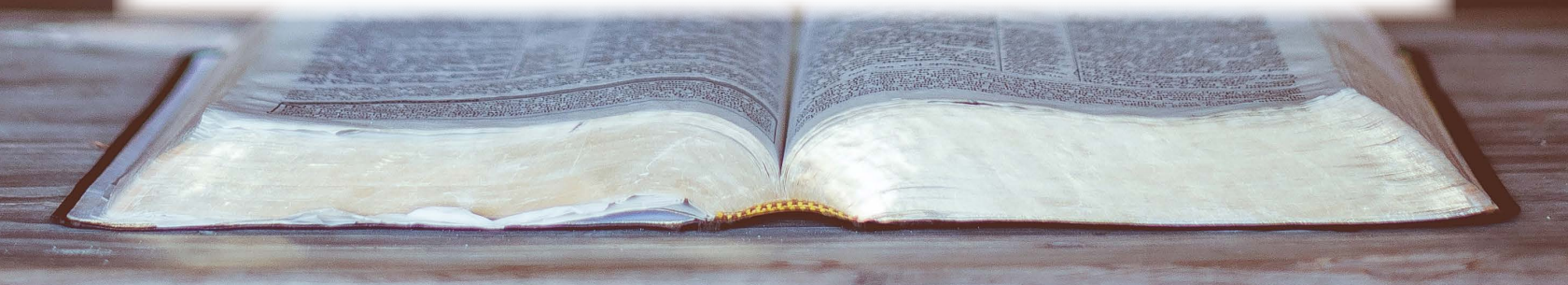

The whole battle we face is centered on the Word. Churches are dead because preachers are confused about how to exercise the authority given by the Word of God. After making a "small" compromise on God's authority, King Saul was informed that he had compromised his own authority: "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king" (1 Samuel 15:23). If only our hearts could remember that "to obey is better than sacrifice" (v22). Our rebellion and stubbornness would then submit to heaven's authority!

I believe that the law of the Lord is perfect and is the safe rule for faith and practice for every Christian and every church and every home. The law of the Spirit provides safe leadership. The law of faith is the proper method. The law of love is the proper motive. When we love God and our fellow man as ourself, we are keeping the law. When we practice the Golden Rule, we fulfill the law.

Now then, where do we get our authority? It will be necessary for us to visit an open tomb. Then we must see the nail-scarred hands of our Savior from which the blood of the everlasting covenant flowed. Then we must hear the words, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18).

What is authority? It's a crippled Jacob, finally leaning on the God of his father and grandfather. It's a stuttering Moses, finally finding his voice in the Word of God. Choosing to live by faith, Moses "forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27). Flimsy pulpits bind the people of God, but when the Word of God is let loose, there is freedom.

My preacher brother, when we finally get our authority from "Thus saith the Lord," we solve just about all of our pulpit problems. Preach from the Menu! You have no more right to ask your church what they want you to preach than a shepherd does to ask the sheep where they want to be fed and watered. The flock doesn't need opinions, they need examples! (I Peter 5:2-4).

We see the supreme and unlimited authority of Jesus in the land of Gadara, commanding the Gadarene's liberation and dressing him up in a new suit and letting him sit in peace at Jesus' feet. We see it on the storm-swept deck of the ship after Jesus said "Peace, be still." We see it during His personal duel with the devil in the wilderness as He filleted him three times with the Sword of the Spirit.

Oh, my friend, let's not surrender or swap the commandment of God for the tradition of men. Without authority, we are like a car without a motor, like a boat without a sail or a rudder, like a stove without a fire, and like a human body without a heart.

I want you to do what I did this morning. I took a walk across the wheat fields and knelt in the shade of some beautiful trees. To the tune of bobwhites whistling and a gentle breeze blowing under cloudless sky, I prayed this prayer. And I want you to pray it today:

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Our Father,

Give us hearts of submission and the Word of wisdom,
the gift of discernment and the power of the Spirit,
the love of God and the compassion of Christ,
the courage of Daniel and the boldness of the Apostles
when they said, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Give us, Lord, the tears of Paul and the tenderness of blessed John,
the faith of the Hebrew children and the patience of Job,
the conviction of Esther when she said, "If I perish, I perish,"
the loyalty of Jonathan and the humility of the prodigal son,
the forgiveness of Stephen and the sacrificial spirit of John Bunyan.

And dear Lord, most of all, give us the yieldedness
to Thy will that makes us available for service.
Lord, we pray that this message will be read with great profit.
In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Memorials

We remember & honor:

Basil & Virginia Bish
by Fred & Kentrina Zirkle

Callie Burns
by Pat Reid

Linda Charleston
by Don Charleston

Judith Custer Fenlason
by Clay Custer

Roy & Grace Matthew
by Billie Sipes

Glen E. White
by David R. White

Rev. James M. White
by Verna Rogers

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We will send an appropriate card to the bereaved on your behalf (the amount of the gift is not disclosed). To donate, complete and enclose this form, or visit roloff.org.

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Mailbox

"I am in jail, but I am in touch with you, because a pastor who comes every week to preach the Word dropped off the tract, 'Pursued by Hope.' I read John Down's testimony, and it touched me. I realize I've got to change my ways." (Inmate Virginia)

"God bless all the work you do to keep Brother Roloff on the air. He was a great preacher. We don't have many like him anymore. He was such a blessing." –RS

"A brilliant man and a clear Gospel voice reverberating through time. What a witness to reality." –EK

"I'm listening to the 90 day devotional, and I find it amazing that these messages are so applicable today even more so than when they were preached!" –SB

"Your ministry has touched my heart and soul, and I listen to Brother Roloff every day on my phone. Keep up the amazing work spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ." –JB

"Brother Roloff is still witnessing even though he was called home some time ago. Miss you, and look forward to meeting you soon, brother!" –WD

"The Family Altar Radio ministry has been such a tremendous blessing to me and my family! Thank you for keeping Brother Roloff's ministry and preaching on the air 24/7. It is both greatly needed and appreciated." –TW

"I thank God for your ministry. I was a worse-case scenario, backsliding Christian, and it was through your broadcasting of Brother Roloff that God convicted my heart and called me back like the prodigal son of Luke 15. Love you guys." –LM

"Dear REE team, Thank you for Brother Roloff's article 'Faith.' It truly is a blessing to live in faith in the Lord. The Lord never fails. I am 94 years old and have much to be thankful for. I thank God for His faithful workers that encourage us in the faith. So thank you for all that you do in the furtherance of God's eternal work." –MR