

Pondering I Give You Authority

TRANSCRIPT (AUTO-GENERATED)

Well, hello, and welcome to Ponder by NorthernLife. We're having a conversation about the Word of the Lord as it was preached to us on Sundays, and as we encounter it in our everyday lives. My name is Jack.

I'm joined by Tristo, Benno, and Jono here today as we're discussing Ben's sermon on I Give You Authority, talking about healing and deliverance especially. You'll have to forgive us.

Three of us are sort of recovering from illnesses, which is sort of the irony of having a sermon series on healing. But hopefully, it's not too distracting for you. Ben, do you want to give us a recap of that sermon and what it was about?

Well, yeah, as you mentioned, it's been a sort of hectic couple of weeks on staff.

We've all been taken out by sickness right as we had planned to do a series on healing and deliverance.

And so I tell the story at the start of the sermon, and I won't recap it now, but the message was based on Matthew 10 verse 1, Jesus sending out the twelve, giving them authority to drive out demons and to heal the sick.

And so in the sermon, we looked at authority, his authority, its authority, our authority. We looked at deliverance, how we apply the authority of Jesus to the topic of dealing with the dark spiritual powers that are in opposition to God.

And then we looked at healing, how we can walk in the authority of God and pray for healing.

And sort of one of the main things that I took from it is the connection between authority and intimacy, that as we step out in authority, we also need to step into intimacy with Jesus, who will lead us in using his authority.

Reflections, guys, coming off from that sermon?

I listened to it twice at home. I watched it, and I just thought it was a great message. Solid covered the ground in a balanced way.

Appreciate it.

Yeah, I really enjoyed it, because it's not something we speak on that often in our context today. So it was a nice re-reality check, if I can put it that way. Yeah.

Yeah, I thought it was a really solid and sort of systematic approach to deliverance and healing.

One of the things you talk about a lot is the idea of the dark powers, and how you can either go too far in seeing a demon under every rock, or you can go too far in the other direction, and be selectively spiritual, I think was the phrase.

And obviously, the ideal is for us to sort of walk in between those.

I'm someone who probably is more prone to the demon under every rock sort of tendency.

But I guess, what would you guys say are the indicators that the dark powers might be at work in events in our lives versus them not being, you know, it just being life?

Good question. I've always felt like if it drives you to unbelief, there's a chance that could be something else there. Just losing heart and moving towards unbelief.

It's a classic evil one sort of temptation question. Is he really worth it? Is he, you know, that whole Judas sort of, this could have been sold for a year's wages, and that undermining the worth, I feel is just a little bit of a hint, a tell.

It's also, not to say that addiction is always this at all, but demonic influence. The pictures we often see is this chain bondage, but you can't get away. You've lost freedom, which is very much what addiction and the cycle of addiction looks like.

So sometimes hard, you need discernment to work out, is there a demonic power that's getting hold of this, like the flies around the dead thing? Yeah.

We've spoken in the past about the difference between a test and a temptation. The test being God's voice leading us to kind of prove our faith and to grow, and the temptation being the enemy's voice to lead us to sin.

And so anytime you're, I don't know if maybe we could say anytime or a lot of the time when we're tempted towards sin and we're hearing a voice that is pulling us away from God, there's a good chance that the enemy is behind that voice, or at least

sin is behind that voice, taking us away from God.

Yeah, I think any event in our lives that seems to be frustrating the purposes of God is caused for suspicion, maybe, if not necessarily automatically jumping to a conclusion.

Because we know the ends to which our enemy works.

We know that he works for particular goals, and so we can identify that when things seem to be frustrating the plans of God, when they seem to align with the steal, kill, and destroy intents of the enemy.

Or as you say, Jonah, if they're leading us to unbelief, drawing us away from the life that God desires from us, then sometimes, especially when they seem to be inexplicable, sometimes those sort of things especially sort of cause us to raise an

eyebrows. I mean, Satan's not going to come and tempt you into becoming a more loving father or a kinder person. So we can know, if we know our enemy, we can know the purposes to which he works usually.

Yeah, it's something that, as a Christian, we don't probably talk about it enough, that you want to grow in your capacity to have confidence in your discernment. So, yeah, like people say, medicine is not all science, it's a lot of art.

A good GP has just spent time with people and watched things out unfold. And I think it's the same with pastoral discernment about the demonic, that you just sort of have a sense. You just have a discernment, and it's like there's something here.

And if someone says, well, how do you know? I would say, because I've been doing it for 35 years. And I just have a sense, and I've learned to back that, not in self-confidence, but in a spiritual gifting and walking with God.

That's what it's all about, learning to hear God's voice. And this is something that we should be very confident in, that God's voice says, hey, there's something here.

You need to step into this with authority, and rebuke it, and name it, and look for the work of the evil one. And build growing confidence in that.

As I said in the sermon, I don't have much or any experience with specific demonic manifestation. But that was what you're saying has been my experience for these past two weeks.

Just the getting sick and so many different things being frustrated, I was sensing and in a way growing in my ability to discern.

There's just stuff happening here, and I almost more than any sermon I've ever preached, felt that I had to preach this one, and I had to push hard and pray it through.

And in preaching that message, even in saying kind of strong worded stuff, my opening line was the devil tried to stop me preaching this message, which I believe that's a weird thing to say, but I believe it's true.

I just, yes, sense that there was stuff happening in the past two weeks that we had to push through as a church and as a staff. And that's kind of a, yeah, it's been a learning experience for me to grow in discernment of that kind of thing.

And when I was at home, when you said those words, I was prompted very much more than normal to be praying for protection over your life and your wife and your daughter, because, you know, it's sort of suddenly, like, whoa, okay, this is warfare.

And prayer is the key for protection in that.

Sort of following on from that, because Ben sort of mentioned, ideally, Jono, you were planning to preach on deliverance because you've had some experience with this.

I don't know if you've had any, Tristan. I personally haven't had experiences of the demonic, and Ben, you said the same.

I wondered if you could share some things you've learned through your encounters, Jono and Tristan, if you've had them as well, about dealing with this sort of thing, be it deliverance or from a healing perspective as well.

Yeah, my experience is part of the congregation, not me actually dealing with it because I was way too young. I think I was... The first time I saw it was when I was nine, and the second time just before I got saved, I was 11.

So, both those times, it was just... Yeah, I don't think it will be helpful for me to describe the nature of it. Like, it was just someone being aggressive and that type of attitude.

But there was a very clear response from the leadership team within the church by saying, speaking with authority and naming it out. That's a real great power to, like, speaking with such conviction in saying no, you know.

So I think, from my experience, that was the main response to it. But I'm not diverse in hands-on dealing with it. Yeah.

But it's very real.

Yeah. Ben's point about intimacy, I think, is very important. If you're not walking with the Lord, maybe you're in willful disobedience in some area of your life.

It's just less likely that you're going to be ministering in the power of the name of Jesus to set captives free in deliverance ministry. But if you are walking with Him, it's like the name I Give You Authority, I think that's a key part to it.

And learning that the authority is that we are the deputy, we're working in His name, the name of Jesus. But there is an authority that's there.

My reflection on it is, it's a lot like a person who knows dogs, and they have authority over dogs, and they can speak in such a way. They're not always yelling at all, but they just have authority. They just do not do that here to the dog.

And it sort of sounds cheeky. It's not... Jude, I think, says, you know, people speak of powerful angels in disrespectful ways.

I don't mean to be saying that. It's not suddenly, you know, we're pushing the evil one around in our own strength, but we do have authority when we are walking closely with the Lord to use our words to speak the will of God.

And, yeah, so I have had lots of experiences over the years, some in other parts of the world, many here, some as individuals, some as territorial spirits, which is a bit weird, too.

We didn't talk about that at all, and I wouldn't get heaps into that, but that confronted me.

I didn't ask for that, but when I was about 26, I'd come back from Africa, and I was praying in the church at six o'clock in the morning, and I just felt like there was a territorial spirit, like something big, like really big and scary.

And I started praying on my knees, and I started praying against a first, I was worshiping the Lord, and I started praying against a spirit of confusion and control. And it was like, I didn't even know there were those demons, confusion and control.

I've never uttered them before out of my mouth. And without going into the whole story, very quickly in the weeks to come, confusion and control was manifest in our church, such that there was a split in our church.

It was just like coming to a head of a whole lot of spiritual powers going on.

And at the same time, in answering to your question of how do you know it's spiritual stuff, I've often had someone come in as a prophet and speak to me, straight up to me and say, like a week after that happened, I told nobody, and a woman turned

up, who was the daughter of one of the founding elders of the church, the church of about 70 years old. And she said, there's a spirit of confusion in this church. The Lord's told me to come and tell you that. And she gave me a verse to counter it.

I was blown away. I was in the foyer of the church, 26 year old guy. And I'm like, what just happened?

That's bizarre. And then I was at a deacons meeting. And we were having a facilitated meeting going around the deacons and the board.

There was about 15 people in the room. And the facilitator, John Edmonston, was saying, how do you feel? How do you feel?

And every person said, I'm confused. I'm confused. I'm confused.

So the two demons that I was told to pray against were confusion and control. And I think it was the woman came and said about control, actually, to me. So they were the two.

Yeah. So it's very real, but I find that it's hard to live in that space all the time. I just really do.

There's two traps we can fall into when it comes to speaking about demons and spiritual warfare and all these things.

Yes, it's good to acknowledge it. But the two traps we fall into is underestimating it and overestimating it.

Because I feel it's good to acknowledge, but if you over fixate on the sort of topic, that's why we're speaking with great caution, that's why Ben was speaking with caution for some areas in the sermon.

When we over fixate on things like this, we give ourselves to the trap of they luring us in to that sort of thinking and that way of fixation taking our eyes off God.

So I would say there's a great, yeah, those two traps of underestimating it and overestimating it is key to navigating in that middle area of acknowledgement of these things are real.

Thinking about how we can respond to the lies that the enemy sometimes puts into our lives.

So we've talked about strongholds as the sort of mental lies that the enemy can infuse us with. And Ben, you were talking about that, that sort of, there's a father about sort of memorizing scripture and using scripture to counter the lies.

And I had a question about that, and it's funny because one of our listeners put in a question about the same thing. So let me read that out.

Following the three-step model in the sermon when it comes to practice, what are some good ways to store scripture in our long-term memory?

For context, I'm asking with my teacher hat on because I consistently see kids creating endless flashcards or typing away thinking they are memorizing this stuff, but really they are not. So that is from our friend of the show, Kathleen.

Thoughts on that? I guess what are the practical ways that we can actually lock in scriptural memorization? We've got that it's important.

What are the techniques you found helpful?

Repetition rewires the brain. It's just repeating the verse is helpful. Spaced repetition as well, coming back to it after a couple of days.

I remember I memorized the first half of the Sermon on the Mount on Courtney and my trip to Europe. And so we'd be riding on the bus in Switzerland, and I'd just be going through the Beatitudes in my head.

And then when I got stuck, I'd pull it out and check, and then I put my phone away and do it again. And so maybe repetition is, maybe that's what Kathleen's indicating is not always helpful. Flashcards might be helpful, might not.

But just coming back to it again, I told a story in a sermon once of our family friends had Colossians Chapter 3 on the back door of the toilet. And we were at this family's house, like, all the time, every week.

And, you know, obviously you spend time in the toilet at your family friend's house. And so I memorized Colossians 3 by looking at it, staring at it on the back door of the toilet wall.

And so just keeping scripture before your mind, maybe printing it out and putting it on the fridge, constantly returning to it, making it the background of your phone.

Any way of getting it before your mind consistently is the repetition that's required to rewire the brain.

Another good thing you can do is pray the scripture and sort of embed it into you by the using of the truth of the text in your everyday life.

I'm quite passionate about scripture memorization, and people often say, I just can't memorize things. My brain is fried from work. And it's like, well, sure, I don't understand your work situation.

But you can probably sing along to your favorite song. And if you put effort in, you're memorizing a heck of a lot of things in your life. Maybe you're just not prioritizing putting in the effort required to memorize scripture.

I remember, I think you told me once, dad, that Dallas Willard had a rule that he would fast on planes, and he wouldn't eat food on a plane, and he'd use that time to memorize scripture.

Just putting in the hours required to, David says in Psalm 119, I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. It takes effort. It's not easy.

And so you've got to find what works for you.

Although interesting that you mention people memorizing lyrics, because I think actually the amount of Bible verses I remember because of Columby Cannon songs, I think that if you want to try putting it to music as a helpful technique, because we

just naturally remember rhythm better. So that's another tip that can help. I mean, I assume that there's tons of verses that have already been put to music already for kids ministry and that sort of thing.

So even if it sounds like a kid's song, it's a great way to try and help you memorize it.

A really good album is, they did, I think, two volumes on the Psalms, is Shane and Shane.

Oh yeah.

They've done great work in terms of not really adjusting the words to the music, but rather music to the words.

That won't be, that won't give you a precise memorization, but it will still give you the sense of...

It's on the road to doing so.

Yeah.

And verbalizing, I mean, that might sound obvious, but I've always found trying to memorize out loud makes a big difference to just doing it in your mind.

One of the things they taught us when we were learning Greek, a great way to memorize things is location-based learning.

So this was with vocabulary, but I think you could adjust it to Bible verses is like, you have certain words in the living room, and you just, whenever you come to the living room, you read those little word cards, and you just associate it with that

room, and that's just, you can get a little mental links about, or telling yourself little stories that help you remember the particular words of the verse. All of that is helpful.

Moving on to healing. We've got a question submitted.

You've got to leave those coughs in. Yeah.

We have a question submitted by Jolene, who says, Thank you for a beautiful message in a season where there are many questions about healing.

I have a cousin who's more like a sister that has struggled with ataxia, a disease that attacks the nervous system. She has struggled with this for over 10 years and is now wheelchair bound.

It's hard to watch her body deteriorate when we pray for healing. It's hard to explain to unbelievers who don't understand her faith in her situation. Sometimes I feel that we pray for healing, but still expect the worst.

Does that demonstrate a lack of faith? When we prepare for the future through insurance policies, etc., does that too demonstrate a lack of faith?

That's a tough question. Well done, Jolene. You've put your finger right on the hardest mystery within our theology of healing.

As I kind of briefly mentioned in the sermon, I don't think we can say that lack of faith is always a factor. It's a factor. It can be a factor.

Perseverance is a factor. Elders with oil is a factor. Sin is a factor.

But the New Testament simply resists us creating a neat three-step formula for healing.

And so I tried to walk the tension between saying that God is able to heal and often willing to heal, but he's always able to give a grace that is sufficient to sustain us.

And even though we pray for the healing of the body, our ultimate hope is the resurrection of the dead body, not the healing of the sick body.

Yeah, I think it's interesting, this idea of expectation and what role does expectation play and pray in faith?

Because on the one hand, I think there is a part of faith that like, I do want to pray with expectation that God is going to respond, and that if I'm truly trusting in God, then that's sort of something to be a part of my prayer, that yeah, I kind of

expect God to answer me in some way. Because I have this relationship with him. Because he doesn't always answer in the way we want. Tyler Staten had an interesting line that I come back to.

I think it was in his book, *Living Like Monks, Praying Like Fools*, where he said we need to put God in the position where he can disappoint us.

That actually, like a genuine relationship with God is not necessarily like preparing ourselves for him to, you know, not answer us.

But to actually say, yeah, I'm going to do something that's really hard, because there's a very good chance that he will disappoint me.

But I'm going to expect God to do something and allow myself to be put in a really vulnerable space where God could very much disappoint me. I think that's a really hard thing to do.

And it's tricky to navigate, but I think if no other thing, it is an exercise in taking our relationship with God to a deeper place that we might expect things from him that he might not do.

That's good. The discussion isn't that vague. Like the Bible tells us to pray.

The option of not praying is not there. Yeah. So we're meant to bring our needs before God.

That alone puts us in a posture that is good for us. We're the creature, he's the creator. And he's invited us to bring all of our needs to him.

All the pain, all the struggles, because we're meant to talk to him. So then the difficult thing is, does that involve faith for healing? As the question says.

Well, you can't come and genuinely talk to an invisible being without having faith. So I think there is a lot of faith just there. If you just keep turning up, talking to God.

And, but most of us have realized, you don't get everything you ask for. So that sounds like I'm not saying much here, but the one point is, not praying is not an option.

So, you know, controlling and building and allowing faith to grow is our challenge, and faith comes by hearing the word of the Lord. So you've got to keep coming back to God's word. It builds our faith.

We come to the only one who can truly solve our problems. And I think, too, if someone's got worn out, just add kindness in there about the character of God. Just say, Lord, out of your kindness, could you give us a break?

You told us to keep knocking on the door. You told us to be persistent. You told us to have audacious faith.

So I'm doing that. I'm just knocking on the door. And I know you're kind and compassionate, slow to anger, and you want to bless to the thousandth generation.

So I'm just calling on your character. And we don't get told how long that is. But to keep doing that, that's a good thing.

You can just lock that away and bank it. To keep asking God about real things, bringing all your needs before Him, that's the way it's meant to be.

Yeah, and I think there's a real... The Scripture invites us to speak with the boldness that you were just talking about, and to make my case before God and say, God, I am suffering. You claim that you love me.

This is what you said your character is like. Please respond. There's an element for it, which God is big enough and strong enough to be able to take us, sort of, a forceful prayer from us.

Yeah, for sure. And how we respond if He doesn't respond in the way we want is another thing. But I think scripture, you look at the prayers of David, you look at the Psalms.

Yeah, there is something to be said for, hey, God, what are you doing? Do as you said.

Moving to this idea of, Ben, you talked about we lament with those who lament, and we rejoice with those who rejoice, and that those two things kind of walk hand in hand when it comes to healing, in that some people are healed, some aren't.

On a practical level, for me, if I am, I guess, if I'm in that situation where someone's been healed over here, and someone has not over here, how do I lament and how do I rejoice?

Like, in a practical level, how do I sit by someone and care for them and lament with them? What does that look like for me to do?

The best way to do what you just described is to feel, and do not be afraid to feel. That's the main thing. Sort of allow yourself to go, wow, I'm going to celebrate with you.

I'm going to rejoice with you, like, in a winsome way, in an almost naive way. I'm just going to be thrilled by what's going on.

And the same is true, like, if you're not going to try to just give people words and sort of guide them to the truth that they need to hear in their pain, I don't think there's a whole lot more to do than cry with them, or just be quiet with them.

You either sit with them, but if you're feeling the pain, they've shed a lot of tears. You probably haven't shed a lot of tears. It's a pretty normal human condition to sort of cry with someone.

And I don't think you have to try that hard. It's to feel. Walk with them.

Feel the pain that they have.

I think before we get to that step, it's important to make yourself available to it.

Because often, especially in the church context, where people are going through different things, life in different stages, married singles, all these different little dynamics that rewire people's foot parts within the church, I think it's real

power in saying, I'm going to have time for you now. Like, I have time for you when I'm in these doors. Like, it's making yourself available to say, I can't grab you for 15 minutes or something. I just have something to share with you.

And making yourself present in that moment. That the first step is being available to those conversations. And yes, sometimes we are not in a space where we are available to do so.

But when you are, make it known. Be intentional.

I think important also, in thinking about what not to do, is that when we're lamenting with people, it's not necessarily our place to try and fix the problem.

It's not necessarily our place to try and give our opinion, or even to try and provide a, you know, maybe someone's upset at God. It may not necessarily be the moment to try and defend God.

But actually, what lamenting is, is not so much an intellectual exercise as it is just being with someone and listening, and actually shutting yourself up.

There's place for the other stuff later, but the act of lamenting is about just being with someone and listening to them. I think of Job's friends who are terrible at this.

But for the first three days, at least, they just sit with him as he's lamenting. And you know, yeah. So it's important for us to sort of lay aside all the thoughts that might be going on in our internal voice and just be able to be with someone.

Finally, on a happy note, tips for rejoicing with people as well. What does it look like for us to celebrate with people? In some sense, it comes naturally, but...

Don't be afraid to spend money.

Say yes a few more times than you say no.

Yeah, I got nothing. I think it is largely intuitive. If you're available and you're feeling, then you have a good chance of rejoicing with those who rejoice.

I'm big on emotions sometimes.

So we had a string of engagements that happened over the last couple of two months or so. So even though I knew it was happening, they came and said, oh, yay, we're engaged and the whole church reacts.

And then I have a tendency to go big on my emotion a little bit extra, just to make them feel like this is amazing. But I'm not faking the emotion. I'm just showing it more in a way.

So I find that's a great way to get people excited about, this is a huge thing in terms of rejoicing with each other. Like make it big for them. Like even if it's off my L's and to my P's, huge.

Well done. You're almost there. Like make the trivial things big.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

You don't want to be the person who sort of, you know, you come up, you got really exciting news and you say it, and they're like, oh yeah, cool. Like you don't want to dampen it for it. You don't want to dampen it.

You want to respond with the energy that they're responded with and make it bigger. Yeah.

Any palate cleanser?

My relationship with palate cleanser questions is troubled.

Well, we might move to a palate cleanser question. I'm still kind of tossing up if I want to keep doing these palate cleanser questions.

So if you have an opinion of whether you like or dislike those palate cleanser questions, please comment on this episode and let us know.

The palate cleanser question I have today resulted from a conversation me and Tristan had with Hamish this Saturday, which he suggested was, what is your relationship with piercings? Would you get one? And where?

Oh, yeah, no.

No.

I was threatened by my grandmother.

She said, you can get it, but be knowing it will get ripped out. Like, very much no.

Was there ever a time in your life where you kind of wanted one?

I had my ear pierced when I was about 18, 19. And I was working in a place that got so dirty, got so infected, that my ear lobe swallowed the earring.

The earring was fully in the globe, the ear lobe, and I remember pushing it out with a whole lot of other parts, and that, oh, you wanted to ballot cleanse it, didn't you? That just cleansed people's stomachs.

But yeah, that was, after that infected ear, it was like, I don't really want to have an earring.

I mean, fair enough.

I can sort of taste it now.

I think we've all been put off in piercings after that. Yeah, I went through an angsty phase just out of high school, where I kind of wanted an eyebrow piercing, but thankfully I never went through with it. I was dissuaded from that course of action.

Ben, any further comments?

It's a no from me, dog.

Okay. Well, I think that will do us for today. Thank you all for listening.

Thank you all for coming on the podcast, and we'll catch you on the next one.