

Kingdom Authority and Unity

Theme – What does God Want? How may we know?

For I delight in faithfulness, not simply in sacrifice; I delight in acknowledging God, not simply in whole burnt offerings. (Hosea 6:6)

With what should I enter the LORD's presence? With what should I bow before the sovereign God? Should I enter his presence with burnt offerings, with year-old calves? Will the LORD accept a thousand rams, or ten thousand streams of olive oil? Should I give him my firstborn child as payment for my rebellion, my offspring – my own flesh and blood – for my sin? **He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the LORD really wants from you: He wants you to carry out justice, to love faithfulness, and to live obediently before your God.**(Micah 6:6-8)

Then Samuel said, **“Does the LORD take pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as he does in obedience? Certainly, obedience is better than sacrifice; paying attention is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and presumption is like the evil of idolatry.** Because you have rejected the LORD's orders, he has rejected you from being king.” (1 Samuel 15:22-23)

The LORD says, “Wise people should not boast that they are wise. Powerful people should not boast that they are powerful. Rich people should not boast that they are rich. If people want to boast, they should boast about this: **They should boast that they understand and know me. They should boast that they know and understand that I, the LORD, act out of faithfulness, fairness, and justice in the earth and that I desire people to do these things,**” says the LORD. (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

I, therefore, the prisoner for the Lord, **urge you to live worthily of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, putting up with one another in love, making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you too were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.** But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, **“When he ascended on high he captured captives; he gave gifts to men.”** Now what is the meaning of **“he ascended,”** except that he also descended to the lower regions, namely, the earth? He, the very one who descended, is also the one who ascended above all the heavens, in order to fill all things. **And he himself gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, that is, to build up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God – a mature person, attaining to the measure of Christ's full stature.** So we are no longer to be children, tossed back and forth by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching by the trickery of people who craftily carry out their deceitful schemes. **But practicing the truth in love, we will in all**

things grow up into Christ, who is the head. From him the whole body grows, fitted and held together through every supporting ligament. As each one does its part, the body builds itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:1-16)

Kingdom Authority

Jesus replied, “**I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**” (John 14:6)

Jesus replied, “My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my servants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish authorities. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.” Then Pilate said, “So you are a king!” Jesus replied, “You say that I am a king. **For this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world – to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.**” (John 18:36-37)

Then Jesus came up and said to them, “**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.** And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Mat 28:18-20)

He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**” And Jesus answered him, “You are blessed, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven! And I tell you that you are Peter, **and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will have been released in heaven.**” (Mat 16:15-19)

Apostolic Delegation to Elders

The Apostles (especially Paul and Peter) delegated authority to elders (presbyters):

Acts 14:23 – “*Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church...*”

→ A direct example of apostolic delegation in local congregations.

Titus 1:5 – “*The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town...*”

→ Paul delegates to Titus the responsibility to appoint elders, showing indirect delegation of apostolic authority.

1 Timothy 3:1-7 – Qualifications for elders (also called overseers).

→ Though not directly about apostolic authority, it shows the apostolic guidelines for leadership.

1 Timothy 5:17-22 – *“The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor...”*

→ Elders hold real authority; Paul warns not to lay hands hastily, showing careful delegation.

2 Timothy 2:2 – *“...entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”*

→ Paul encourages Timothy to perpetuate leadership through trustworthy men.

1 Peter 5:1-3 – *“To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings... Be shepherds of God’s flock...”*

→ Peter, an apostle, identifies himself as an elder and exhorts others to shepherd, showing collegial authority.

Truth, Authority, Unity

Discerning truth is essential for unity in the church. Without spiritual discernment, believers may fall into error, deception, or harmful division. Scripture calls God’s people not only to know the truth, but to test, examine, and uphold it.

Discernment defends unity by:

Preventing division over false or misapplied doctrine.

Protecting the flock from spiritual manipulation.

Promoting maturity, which leads to clarity, humility, and shared understanding.

Practice discernment:

Measure claims by **Scripture** (Acts 17:11).

Assess outcomes through **spiritual fruit** (Galatians 5:22–23).

Encourage thoughtful **dialogue** rooted in love and truth (Ephesians 4:15).

1 Thessalonians 5:21–22

“Test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.”

→ Paul calls believers to actively **evaluate teachings and influences** rather than accept them blindly.

1 John 4:1

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God.”

→ A direct command to **discern between truth and deception**, especially spiritual and doctrinal influences.

Hebrews 5:14

“But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.”

→ **Discernment develops through spiritual maturity** and disciplined practice.

Matthew 7:15–20

“By their fruit you will recognize them.”

→ Jesus teaches **discernment by evidence**—truth is recognized by the fruit it produces.