

You Can Receive Power

Acts 1:8 *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

Introduction:

It was one morning several years ago when Dru and I lived in Westerville, that I drove past a beautiful yellow Lincoln up the street from us that was for sale.

I had this idea in my head for several years that I would like to own a Lincoln. I actually turned around and went back to the owner and asked him how much he wanted for it.

He named me a price and I asked him if he would take less. He said okay.

It was sharp on the inside and had all the bells and whistles.

I took it for a little test drive and fell in love with it. The test came when we went on vacation.

My Dad and Mom were driving ahead of us in the mountains of West Virginia and I noticed that something seemed to be wrong with the Lincoln. It just didn't have any power to keep up with my dad's car.

I would press the accelerator all the way to the floor and that Lincoln just didn't have enough power to climb those mountains.

I remembered the man saying when he ordered the car he ordered the smallest engine he could for the Lincoln in order to get good gas mileage. Of course, this drove me crazy, I'm driving a beautiful yellow Lincoln and there's no power. It didn't take me long to decide to sell it.

Spiritual Application:

In our Quest to discover The Power to Be Free we are on our journey today to discover the Power from the Holy Spirit.

I really do believe that many believers suffer from the same power-shortage disappointment in their spiritual lives.

We know we need the power to live the Christian life.

Frank Moore says, **“God places an unmistakable quest for power within us. No minister or Christian friend has to tell us we need the power; we intuitively know we need it. Yet, our daily performance does not always match our expectations for this power. So, the quest continues.”**

Throughout my spiritual pilgrimage with God I can testify to this fact in my own life.

I not only need His Purity for my heart, I also need His power.

When I read about what happened on the Day of Pentecost and see where the Holy Spirit fell upon the disciples and I read and discover the change that happened to them afterwards, I immediately have something in me that hungers for this kind of transformation in my own life.

Take Peter for example:

Here was one of the Jesus' chosen disciples who was so self-centered.

He was so impulsive.

He was driven to do his own thing.

At times he was divisive.

And when the Holy Spirit fell upon Peter He transformed him into an energy that was completely driven towards what Christ wanted out of him.

There is no doubt of God's infinite power. Job put it like this when he said, ***"I know that You can do all things; no plan of Yours can be thwarted."***
Job 42:2

Folks, there is no way the New Testament Church could be in existence today had it not been for the Power of God's Holy Spirit that fell on the disciples on the Day of Pentecost.

So, this morning I am asking you to join me in this quest and that finally you and I will see the reality of the Power of the Holy Spirit in our lives that will affect His church here.

I want us to bow our heads for a moment of prayer and let me pray before we go any further in this sermon.

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, Jesus, All of us are here this morning and we are sincerely and desperately seeking Your will and Your gift of the Holy Spirit for our lives.

Would you grant us Your attention right now and help us to get this message from your Word and when it comes time at the end of this sermon, would You come and help us to truly have the indwelling Power of Your Holy Spirit.

Jesus, I can't preach this in my own flesh. I request that you send your Holy Spirit to give me special unction so that Dan Stires will be out of the way and only you will be seen and heard. Amen

I. It's in the Bank

In Ephesians 3:16-19 Paul says, ***"16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.***

Illus:

Frank Moore tells the story in our study about one of his students who had a prayer request for her brother.

She told about his unusual situation.

She and her brother grew up in an expensive home in an extremely wealthy neighborhood.

Once her brother reached adulthood, he rejected his parents' values and lifestyle.

He protested their affluence to the point that he moved out of the family home even though he had nowhere to go.

At the time of his students prayer request her brother was living on the streets eating out of trash cans.

The young man's father provided for his son in case he change his mind by placing a large sum of money in a bank on the street where his son slept. He gave his son a check book for the account with instructions, "If you ever need money, all you have to do is walk into the bank and write a check."

When I read that story I wanted to know if the son took the father's advice.

I wondered what happened to the son.

It was in the bank and all he had to do was walk into the bank and write a check and have what he needed.

He didn't have to sleep on the street and he didn't have to eat out of the garbage cans.

And listen people, it doesn't get any easier than that. The son would never have to sleep in the cold or ever go hungry.

The money was available for him.

Do you see how much God loves us that when He brought Jesus back to heaven to His rightful place, He sent us His special Gift in the person of the Holy Spirit to not only give us His purity, but to give us His Power?

Our text today shows us about this great and wonderful gift that has been made available to us through God.

We don't have to live below our spiritual potential.

All the riches of heaven have been offered to us through our heavenly Father.

The Power that we long for come directly to us from God and It's in the bank.

The check book has been issued and all we have to do is write out the check.

When Paul speaks of this power in this passage he's reminding us of God's forgiveness; he's reminding us of where we use to be; He's reminding us that we have been accepted into the King's family.

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Do you see it? It's in the root of our attitudes.

It's in the fountain from which our emotions spring.

It's the seat of our praise, worship and gratitude for Him.

Believer friend, that's why it's so important for the Spirit of Christ to dwell in us continually and completely.

How do we get this Power?

How do we get the power for the life we've always longed for?

Paul says it comes by our faith in God.

We simply go to God believing in His promise to provide the Holy Spirit who in turn gives us His power.

Listen believer friend, this is not just for grey haired saints of God, this is for every one of you.

Let me illustrate this for you:

You see Paul says when this happens God and His love indwells us completely and we are able then to understand the awesomeness of Christ's love.

II. Power over sin. I John 1:7; 2:1

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“But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin ... My little children, I write this to you so that you will not sin.”

There are some people who really struggle over this issue of living a spiritual life without sinning.

Let me go back and state this again, so that no one here this morning gets the idea that I am preaching sinless perfection.

There was only One who lived a life without sin and that was Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

I am not preaching this morning Christian perfection that says once a believer is filled with the Holy Spirit they will never sin.

God does not give us power so that we can be a Superman or a Wonder Woman in the spiritual sense.

Those of us who have been in the faith for a length of time would know that we deal with temptations and there are times in the Spirit-filled life that we end up transgressing against God's law.

However, on the other hand, we can live a Spirit-filled life that lives above, now here's the key word, habitual sinning.

John makes it clear here: ***“If we walk in the light as He is in the light ... the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin” and “so that you will not sin.”***

The Quest is that we believers understand the answer to these questions:

Are we doomed to repeat sin throughout our spiritual lives?

Is our battle against sin hopeless?

The Word of God tells us absolutely NOT!!

There is good news. Not only can God forgive us of our sins past, but He also has the power to change us from within and reorient our spiritual nature so we can live according to His will for us.

Folks, hear me, God is an all-powerful God and He can do in us what we can't do for ourselves.

God can restore us to His original purpose for us in the work of the Holy Spirit.

Sin creates a twofold problem:

Problem #1

Paul struggled with this in Romans chapter 7 I preached about this last week.

In every one of us there is a sin nature that buried deep within us that causes us to want to do wrong things.

Problem #2

Self-centeredness dwells in every one of us. It remains in us even after God saves us from our sins.

It's not that I want to purposefully sin against God.

It's just that I want to be able to choose to do wrong according to our flesh.

And watch what happens – God then begins to deal with that part of your self-centeredness and zeros in to the point that we recognize our impure heart and lack of power.

It is because of self and because of we want our own autonomy.

But – listen to me – God can give to you and I power over sin to live the life you've always longed for.

III. You can have Power over Trials and Temptations. James 1:2-4, 12-15

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Illustration:

A fly was buzzing along one morning when he saw a lawn mower someone had left out in their front yard.

He flew over and sat on the handle, watching the children going down the sidewalk on their way to school.

One little boy tripped on a crack and fell, spilling his lunch on the sidewalk.

He picked himself up, put his lunch back in the bag and went on.

But he missed a piece of bologna.

The fly had not eaten that morning and he sure was hungry.

So he flew down and started eating the bologna. In fact he ate so much that he could not fly, so he waddled across the sidewalk, across the lawn, up the wheel of the lawn mower, up the handle, and sat there resting and watching the children.

There was still some bologna laying there on the sidewalk.

He was really stuffed, but that baloney sure did look good.

Finally temptation got the best of him and he jumped off the handle of the lawn mower to fly over to the baloney.

But alas he was too full to fly and he went splat!!, killing him instantly.

The moral of the story: Don't fly off the handle when you are full of baloney.

There's a dark side to us, that's as reckless as the fly.

It does not matter what the costs are, you just got to have it.

Humanity is like that, so full of baloney, they can't see it and they fly off the handle, thinking they can handle it all, and be satisfied only to end up splat.

What possible good results from trials?

James tell us several things are a result:

- 1) We grow in patience**
- 2) We become mature and complete in our faith**
- 3) We increase in our faith**
- 4) We receive a reward from God**

James says, ***“Blessed is the man or woman who perseveres under trials, (temptations), because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.”***

James also warns us against surrendering to temptations in vv13-15.

I think it would be good to listen to what Paul says here:

“12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! 13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.” I Cor 10

Let’s learn some lessons very quickly about temptation:

- 1) Temptation will always be a fact in our lives.
- 2) Temptation usually catches us off guard
- 3) Temptation originates outside of us.
- 4) Temptation is common to all of us.
- 5) Temptation has its limits. Satan is not all-powerful.
- 6) You can resist temptation.
- 7) Once temptation passes, you’ll be left standing.

“But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

In other words, when the dust settles and the battle is over, you will be a victor.

Can you see yourself winning the battle?

Can you see yourself standing your ground when Satan comes in like a mighty roaring lion?

Remember Jesus is our greatest example when He met Satan in the wilderness and came out victorious over him.

Listen Christian friend, here is a very wonderful truth:

“Then the devil left him, and the angels came and attended Him.”

IV. Power for Witnessing. I Peter 3:15-16

“15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”

I'm not asking you to go door to door knocking and asking people to let you in.

We did that in the 70's and God did help us to win a lot of people to Jesus.

But I am not here to frighten you or to make you feel guilty because you haven't shared your faith recently.

I want to tell you that God's Word says that when we receive the Power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we will tell others about what has happened to us.

Once Christ has His proper place in your heart and the Spirit of Christ is dwelling in His fullness in your heart, then you can prepare a personal testimony to share with others about your faith.

I'll never forget this backward fellow who attended Faith Memorial when Pastor Jack and I were on staff with John Maxwell in Lancaster.

Bob was about as backward as you could get. He could never look you in the eye and he couldn't hardly carry on a conversation.

But Bob was faithful to come out on Thursday nights when the rest of the Soul-winners came.

Bob prayed and sought after God to be able to witness to someone about how Jesus had changed his life.

So Bob had a plan.

He prepared a testimony on paper and wrote the Scriptures out.

He had a fellow who rode to work with every day during the week.

So Bob prayed for the Holy Spirit to do His Prevenient Grace and when his rider friend got in the car, Bob handed him the paper and said, "Read this."

Can you see Bob driving down the road to work, and his rider friend reading what Bob had written out and when he came to end, Bob said, "Do you want to pray?"

And his friend said, "Yes!" And Bob prayed and his rider friend gave his heart to Jesus that day.

Think through this today! The devil has convinced us Christians that we can't share our faith.

The Word of God tells us we can! So who are we going to believe? The devil or God?

But you say, Pastor, how can I do this?

First of all – Pastor Jack and I have talked about this and we both feel strongly that we are willing to teach a class for those who want to learn How to effectively share your faith with others.

We want to equip you for sharing your faith.

Let me put this up on the Screen for you to prepare a testimony and an effective tool to witness to others:

This will help you to get started:

I want you to think through your response to such questions as the following:

- ❑ How did you come to know the Lord Jesus as your personal Savior?
- ❑ In your own words, who is Jesus Christ?
- ❑ Why are you a Christian believer?
- ❑ What does faith in Jesus mean to you?
- ❑ How do you cope when the troubles of life close in on you?
- ❑ Why do you have such a positive outlook on life?
- ❑ Where is your hope?

Friends, when we think through those, we will always be ready to give a response to those who ask us about our Christian hope.

For too long, the church has made us feel guilty for not witnessing, when the church leaders need to help equip believers to share their faith through the Power of God's Holy Spirit.

V. I come to my last point: Receiving the Power. Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Our Quest has taken us on a search for Power for the life we have longed for.

I don't know about you, but I'm weary of just doing church.

I have a vision in my heart that I want to share with you.

The way we've been doing church has been a blessing to me, and I hope to you also, but folks, I feel there is a Great need to be more obedient to what Jesus is calling our Church to become.

I see our church going on up to 500 people in the very near future.

In order to do that, the church board, all the staff, every department head, and myself have got to be filled with the fullness of God's Holy Spirit.

There are some things that God has been revealing to me that we have to change in our church.

It's going to stretch me as your pastor, and it's going to stretch board members and staff members.

Living in our comfort zones is not what God called us to settle for.

God wants to grant every one of us His power.

Now is the time for us to face this awesome Power of God for the Pataskala Church of the Nazarene.

As you study this week this great work of God, would you be faithful and take your time and let this material and these verses revolutionize your life?

There were three symbols God used at the Spirit's coming:

Fire – which purifies our hearts.

See the Fire and remember the Fire is applied to our hearts and mouths. On the Day of Pentecost God used His fire to purify the hearts of His 120 disciples.

The Wind – which reminds us of its ability to separate the chaff from the wheat. The Holy Spirit comes to blow away all that is unholy in our lives. On the Day of Pentecost there was the sound of mighty rushing wind.

Listen to it!

The miracle of the languages reminds us of the call to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ to every person in his or her own tongue.

What happens when this occurs?

Look with me to Acts chapter 2 and verse 6-7, *“And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled...”*

Go down to verse 12, ***“So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘Whatever could this mean?’”***

There's no doubt about it.

God has the power to change your life.

He wants to give it to you.

But you must do what Jesus' disciples did: ask for His gift and wait for His response.

Invitation:

I've kept wondering about that boy that lived on the streets and ate out of trash cans.

He was living way below what he could have been living.

The money was in the bank. All he had to do was write a check on his Father's love for him.

Believer friend, listen to me, God in heaven has done the same thing for you and me.

All we have to do is write a check and request that the Father give us His promise.

Father God never backs down on His promise to His children.