

Power to accomplish the Mission

Sunday June 5th 2022

Ephesians 1:19-23 (NLT) I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power ²⁰ that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. ²¹ Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else not only in this world but also in the world to come. ²² God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. ²³ And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

Paul wanted the believers to understand and grasp the incredible greatness of God's power that not only affects the Christian life, it also enables us to accomplish the mission.

The power by which we have been saved and the power given to us by which we are called live out life and minister is not just any power.

It is dynamic, unlimited, extraordinary, immeasurable, miraculous power working on behalf of believers.

Ephesians 1:19 (GW) You will also know the unlimited greatness of his power as it works with might and strength for us, the believers.

(RSV) what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might

(VOICE) Let them see the full extent of Your power that is at work in those of us who believe, and may it be done according to Your might and power.

(AMP) [so that you will begin to know] what the immeasurable *and* unlimited *and* surpassing greatness of His [active, spiritual] power is in us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of His mighty strength

Ephesians 1:19b-23a (NLT) This is the same mighty power ²⁰ that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. ²¹ Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else not only in this world but also in the world to come. ²² God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. ²³ And the church is his body;

The resources of Christ who is the head of the church are available to his followers who make up His body.

Why does Paul want us to understand the significance of Jesus being the head of the church?

Because the head and the body are connected.

Christ's dominion over the universe is for the benefit of believers: God 'gave him to be head over everything to the church'.

The church has authority and power to overcome all opposition because her leader and head is Lord over all.

Jesus, through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, imparts to the church His power for two primary reasons, to be and to do.

First, the active power of the Holy Spirit is in us in order to live lives that are pleasing to God.

Romans 8:12-14 (NLT) Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. ¹³ For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

Second, this same divine power is also available to us to do what he has called us to do.

Acts 1:8 (NLT) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

What we are called to do, as Christ followers, is spiritual and supernatural in nature. We cannot do it without the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

Glove Illustration: A work glove is made for the job, but it can't do the job until a living hand passes through it. The inner presence and power of the Spirit are like the hand in the glove. You can animate the glove, exhort the glove, push the glove, but it won't do what it was designed to do until the hand works through it.

The early church was birthed in the upper room when the Holy Spirit came upon them and empowered and enabled them to do the work of Christ upon the earth. The Kingdom of God was expanding through the church.

Acts 2:4 (NLT) And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

Acts 2:5-8, 11b (NLT) At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. ⁶ When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers. ⁷ They were completely amazed. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from Galilee, ⁸ and yet we hear them speaking in

our own native languages! ^{11b} And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!”

Peter who had previously denied Jesus three times, having repented and now filled the Holy Spirit stands and preaches the gospel. The result is 3,000 people coming to repentance, being baptized and added to the church.

The Holy Spirit births and activates the church in its mission with power.

Besides the supernatural manifestation of tongues in chapter two, the power of the Holy Spirit was demonstrated in other miraculous ways.

Let’s look at one of many examples of how this power was manifested.

In Acts 3 we find a story of Peter and John ministering to a man who born lame and was brought to the temple gate to beg for money.

Peter pauses and takes the man by the hand and says to him, “I don’t have any silver or gold for you. But I’ll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, get up and walk!”

Immediately the man jumps up and after take taking a few dozen steps, turns to Peter and John and leaps on then in full embrace. The people around them are totally amazed at what happened so much so that they begin to gather around Peter and John.

Acts 3:12 (NLT) Peter saw his opportunity and addressed the crowd. “People of Israel,” he said, “what is so surprising about this? And why stare at us as though we had made this man walk by our own power or godliness?”

- Peter understood that the power that flowed through him and healed this man had nothing to do with how godly he was but with how good and merciful God is.
- He also understood that the that he didn’t make this man well, the Holy Spirit power made him well, he was just the conduit. (*the Glove*)
- More importantly he understood that this demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit to heal this man, as with the miracle of unknown languages in Acts 2, had an end goal, to share the gospel with those around him.

Acts 4:4 (NLT) But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of men who believed now totaled about 5,000.

This story doesn’t end here. The religious leaders don’t like what is going on so they arrest Peter and John and have them thrown into prison overnight.

They bring them out the next day before the council of religious leaders and Annas the high priest. He demanded an answer to one question ... "By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?" (Acts 4:7)

Who authorized you to work this miracle?

Luke describes what happened next...

Acts 4:8-12 (NLT) Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of our people,⁹ are we being questioned today because we've done a good deed for a crippled man? Do you want to know how he was healed?¹⁰ Let me clearly state to all of you and to all the people of Israel that he was healed by the powerful name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the man you crucified but whom God raised from the dead.¹¹ For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures, where it says, 'The stone that you builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.'¹² There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."

Again, we see that the Holy Spirit was actively involved in this account where the gospel was once again presented, however the response wouldn't be with conversions but a threat from the religious leaders who, despite the miracle that was evident before them refused to respond with repentance to the truth.

What was amazing to them wasn't the miracle but the vehicles by which the miracle took place.

Acts 4:13 (NLT) The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.

Their boldness was different. They spoke with authority and power. They weren't afraid for their lives. They had not only been with Jesus they now were filled with the Holy Spirit and power.

The council didn't know what to do about these men. They couldn't deny that the miracle took place as the man who was healed was standing in front of them.

Their goal then wasn't to deny the miracle but to intimidate the church to stop spreading the message of Jesus.

Acts 4:16-18 (NLT) "What should we do with these men?" they asked each other. "We can't deny that they have performed a miraculous sign, and everybody in Jerusalem knows about it.¹⁷ But to keep them from spreading their propaganda any further, we must warn them not to speak to anyone in Jesus' name again."¹⁸ So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.

What was Peter and John's response?

Acts 4:19 (NLT) But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? ²⁰ We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard."

Was this kind of boldness and power limited only to the apostles? No, it was for the church, the body of Christ.

After they were let go Peter and John went back to the believers and told them what took place. So, they all lifted their voice in prayer

Acts 4:29-30 (NLT) And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give us, your servants, great boldness in preaching your word. ³⁰ Stretch out your hand with healing power; may miraculous signs and wonders be done through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

How did God respond?

Acts 4:31 (NLT) After this prayer, the meeting place shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they preached the word of God with boldness.

This is one account of many described in the book of Acts.

Peter and the early church flowed in the same kind of power that Jesus operated in during His ministry.

Acts 10:38 (NLT) And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

The operation and power of the Holy Spirit wasn't limited only to the apostles, it was for the church.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 (NLT) A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. ⁸ To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. ⁹ The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. ¹⁰ He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. ¹¹ It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.

Paul wants us to understand that we not each flow in every gift of the Spirit but, we should be aware that there are power gifts of the Holy Spirit that function through the church.

Sadly, there are many in our day in Christendom who teach that miracles are not for today. God doesn't operate as He did He did in the early church that why we don't see the healing and miracles like they had back then.

May we come to a greater understanding and grasp the incredible greatness of God's power that affects us as Christians. The power by which we have been saved and the power by which we are called live out the life and ministry given to us is not just any power.

The Holy Spirit is the source of the miraculous working power that is working in us and through us. May we walk in greater knowledge and understanding and stay connected to Him as the power source to live the life of holiness and minister in His power to those who need to hear and experience the power of the gospel.

Jesus is the head of the church and we are His body, Let's live like it!!