

The Power of God

by Greg Locke

The power of God is the influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives that gives us strength day by day to live for Christ and have a Christian testimony.

Duration: 51:47

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 1:1, Acts 1:4, Acts 2:1-4, Acts 13:1-3, Philippians 3:14-15

Topics: "Divine Power", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of relying on a higher power to find strength and live for God. He mentions that there is something inside of him that gives him a Christian testimony and allows him to continue on his spiritual journey. The preacher then discusses five ways to know and experience the power of God, emphasizing the need for perseverance and living for God every day. He also references the book of Philippians, where the theme of joy is highlighted, and encourages the audience to have a passion for the power of God.

Transcript

Acts chapter number 1, please, a very familiar portion of Scripture. I suppose I'll begin my reading in verse number 4. Acts chapter number 1 and verse number 4, please. The Bible says, And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

For John shall be baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Notice verse 6. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.

And ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And tonight I preach a subject that I know very little about, but I want to know a lot more about. Simply I preach on the power of God.

Thank you very much. You may be seated. Let's bow our heads and hearts, please, and let's ask the Lord to bless our time together tonight as we study the power of God.

Now, Lord, again, I come to you asking, Lord, humbly, that you would help me tonight as I preach the word of God. I confess to you and I confess to this congregation that I am a nobody. Lord, you told your disciples in John 15, 5, for without me ye can do nothing.

And Lord Jesus, tonight I claim that because I know that is not just a command, it's not just a statement, but Lord, that's a promise. I'm nothing without you. And so I pray tonight that you would intervene on my behalf, and Lord, that you would bless, that you would help my mind and my heart, and Lord, that you would kindle that which I'm going to be preaching on, deep within my heart, that I may convey it to this congregation before me tonight.

Lord, I pray that you would burn this message deep within us. I pray the devil would not be able to snatch the good seed of the word of God from our hearts, but tonight he would spring forth into abundant life, and Father, you would help us as we study the subject at hand. Now, Father, I call myself upon your mercy and ask that you would help me.

Lord, I ask now also that you would help this congregation as they listen to the word of God. May we not be distracted, though we ourselves become a distraction to those around us. Bless the children as they have their time, but bless now as we have the preaching of the word of God, for it's in Jesus' name that we ask it and pray.

Amen. The Book of the Acts is one of my favorite books in all of the New Testament, because all 28 chapters basically have one theme, and that one theme is the early establishment and the propagation of the local New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because you see, ladies and gentlemen, as you peruse your way through the 27 books of your New Testament, especially when you get the chapters like Matthew 16, Matthew 18, and then beginning in Acts chapter number 2, you will find out that the emphasis in the New Testament is not upon some invisible, non-knowing, great big huge church, but it is upon local assemblies, actual, physical, factual local churches.

And just before the power of the Spirit of Almighty God fell down in Acts chapter number 2, and Peter stood forth and preached repentance, and 3,000 people got saved by the grace of God, there was a promise that came to them in an upper room, in an upper chamber, before Peter ever opened his mouth and preached on repentance. Notice, please, in your Bible, as Jesus is discoursing with his disciples, we look here at verse number 1, the Bible says, This former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, all that Jesus began both to do and to teach. And so now what we're going to be dealing with, we're going from the Gospels into a transitional period in the New Testament days, when the local church will be established, and the people will go around the world, turning the world upside down, establishing local, fundamental, Bible-believing, Bible-preaching churches.

And so Jesus said, Before that can ever take place, there is something that you're going to have to have that you do not have right now. Let's see what it is. Look in your Bible, please, in verse number 2. We know that Acts chapter number 1 is not only the promise of the Spirit, but it is the return of the Savior as far as his glorious ascension into heaven.

Verse 11, we find out that those angels came and said, You men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? And so we have that great doctrinal part here in this portion of Scripture. But notice, please, this promise that Jesus begins to give to his disciples, and we find it beginning in verse 4. And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John, speaking of John the Baptist,

truly baptized with water, that ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? They said, We know that you're the promised Messiah. We know that you are the one that is going to come and sit upon the throne of David. And by the way, that will be future tense.

He has not done that, but thank God for a thousand years he will. And I'm going to be with him and have myself a glory fit, that's for sure. But the disciples said, Are you going to now set up your kingdom in Jerusalem? Are you going to restore Israel to the land? Are you going to give us our freedom back? Are you going to get us out from under the bondage of the Roman Empire? You see, that is why your Bible says in John 1.11 that he came unto his own and his own received him not.

But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe upon his name. You know why they wouldn't believe in him? It's not that they didn't want to, because you study your Bible. You will find out at first they did want to believe in him until they found out that he did not come to deliver them from the Roman Empire, but rather to deliver them from their sin.

And they were not interested in being delivered from their sin. They wanted to be delivered from bondage. They wanted to be delivered from the captivity of the Roman province and from Nero and Caesar and the rest of that wicked crowd.

And so now the disciples look at Jesus and say, You're going to give us a promise. Is that promise that you're going to restore Israel to the kingdom? Are you going to set up your kingdom right now and deliver us from the Roman Empire? And they were asking a legitimate question. There wasn't anything wrong with the question that they asked Jesus.

They didn't want to be under bondage anymore. But please notice what Jesus told them in Acts 1 in verse 7. And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the time or the season, which the Father hath put in his own power. He said, Listen, you are not going to change God's mind no matter what you say.

He said, You can beg, you can preach, you can pray, you can plead, you can squat like a baby on that altar and beg God to give this nation back to where it needs to be to restore the kingdom. He said, You can beg all of that. He said, But it's not for you to know the time.

He said, There are some things that are bigger than you and some things that are bigger than I, and we don't always understand the power of God. Isaiah chapter number 55, His thoughts are not as our thoughts. The Bible says, As the rain cometh down from heaven, so is God's thought for us.

I do not understand all that God does. I don't understand the power of God. And that is what Jesus is explaining to these people.

And by the way, if you go on a quest to understand God, you will find out that the pervading theme of the Bible is we're not supposed to understand God. That's what makes Him God because He's bigger than you and He's bigger than me. And so Jesus said, It is not for you to know the things that deal in future times, if you will.

It's not for you to know everything, to understand everything that God has put in His power. But, verse number 8, But ye shall receive power. Context, He's dealing with the very same power that was in the verse before.

But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost gives some abundance. Now, you believe anything you want to tonight, ladies and gentlemen, but the power of God is the most overlooked subject in all the Word of God. You see, we're living in a day when people think it would be a fine thing to have buildings and thank God for buildings.

We're living in a day when people think it would be a fine thing when we have good music and we have good preaching, we have good teaching of the Word of God, we have good standards, and I don't discount that any bit. I thank God for every single bit of it. We're living in a day when it seems like if we can get converts to walk an hour, man, we're doing real well.

If we can put people in the baptismal waters and the waters of the baptism aren't stagnant, we're doing pretty well. We can send young people off to Bible college. It seems like we're doing pretty well.

And you know what? We've got plenty of programs. We've got plenty of prayer meetings. We've got plenty of preachers.

We've got plenty of things in our pocketbooks. The problem is we just don't have the power of God in the day and age in which we live. But did not Jesus say, Ye shall receive power? Now, excuse me.

I am not going to let the charismatic steer me away from the power of God. I am not going to let somebody who has an ignorant mindset when it comes to the Word of God run up and down the aisles, give me up a tent post, speak in tongues, bark like a dog, and run around like a fish out of water. I am not going to let them steer me away from something that God promised me I could have.

And ladies and gentlemen, Jesus looks at His disciples and says, Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. So basically, the main prerequisite to the power of God is salvation. For the apostle Paul said in Romans chapter number one in verse number sixteen, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it, the gospel, is the power of God unto salvation.

And so I believe with all of my heart there is something not spooky, not mystical. I am not talking about Hollywood scare tactics. I am talking about holy word truth.

Not something way out in the future, but I believe there is something that is bigger than me and there is something that is bigger than you that is attainable to the people of God. And I believe it is God's power. I believe it is the fullness of the Spirit of Almighty God.

Does not your Bible say in Ephesians chapter five in verse number eighteen and nineteen, Do not drunk with wine, wherein is extent. But be filled, literally means be ye being filled with the Spirit of God, speaking to yourselves in songs and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord. Now understand me, the power of God is not something that causes me to act in a foolish manner.

The power of God is not something that causes me to act foolishly or to do things to direct attention to me. Let me tell you what I believe. Take it for what it's worth, but I believe the power of God is nothing more than the influence of the Holy Spirit of God in my life that gives me strength day by day to live for Christ and have a Christian testimony.

That's the power of God. If you think I wake up every morning and say, Well, I tell you what, I'm the most spiritual Christian in the face of God. There's something wrong with you, pal.

I don't wake up like that neither do you. There is something that is bigger than us that gives us the strength to live for Him for day to day. There is something that is greater than us.

There is something that is more magnificent than us. There is something inside of me, ladies and gentlemen, that is glorious, that can blossom like a rose, if you will. There is something inside of me that gives me a Christian testimony.

What is it that gives me that strength day by day, mile by mile, hour by hour? What is it that gives us that strength to continue to go on? I'll tell you what it is. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. I want to point just for the next few moments tonight on just a few ways.

Maybe four, maybe five. If God gives me an extra one, we'll have five. Amen.

But five ways tonight you can know. Did you hear me? Not that you can hope, but five ways you can know when you leave this building that you can have the power of God. Now, please look me right here in these two eyeballs, OK? I'm not throwing myself in the mater basket tonight and saying I haven't.

If anything, I have a very great big lack of it, and I want a whole lot more of it. And so I'm preaching to myself tonight just as much as I'm preaching to any person under the sound of my voice in this building. But let me give you just a few ways that I believe, according to the word of God, we can know we have the power of God.

And by the way, the lack of these things is no doubt the lack of the power of God. Very elementary, low to the ground, kindergarten Christianity outline. Follow me.

Number one, the power of God comes first and foremost through prayer. The power of God has always come to those who avail themselves to God in prayer. There was an elderly lady in Texas.

A pastor went and visited her in a little convalescent home, a little nursing home. And they began to talk back and forth. And he would sing her a couple of little choruses, and boy, she'd just giggle with glee.

And I mean, she was just so excited. And he would read her some verses. And just before he got ready to leave, he would pray with her.

And he talked with her about how much God loved her, and this, that, and the other. And as they were talking back and forth, he got ready to leave. And she said, you know what, preacher? She said, you know, I found the secret to the Christian life is the power of God.

And he said, is that right? He said, well, what is it that gives you the power of God? She said, I believe it's prayer. She said, I believe the more a person prays, the more a person will have the power of God. She says, I have understood one thing in life.

He said, what's that? She said, the only time you'll ever see power before prayer is in the dictionary. And I'm going to tell you something, ladies and gentlemen, that's exactly right. The only time you will ever see power coming before prayer is in the dictionary.

Because if you're not a person that prays, I promise you, you're not a person who accidentally comes across the power of God. You think about the disciples just for a moment. I was reading about their life, you know, going through the Gospels and studying them.

And I'll tell you, I was convicted at something that they asked the Lord Jesus. I preached on it 100 times. I quoted it.

I read through it. You've heard it. We've taught the kids.

You know what the disciples looked at Jesus? He basically said, what do you want from me? And they said, Lord, teach us to pray. That really grabbed a hold of me. You know, sometimes you'll read John 3, 16 a thousand times.

You'll read it a thousand and one and God will jump out of a Bible and just drag you and just drift you right down to the book and say, look at that. It will show you something you've never seen before. And when I read that, Lord, teach us to pray.

I thought to myself, now that is a terrific thing. You say big deal. Oh, it is a big deal.

I'll tell you why. They didn't say, Lord, teach us to preach. But doesn't that seem like that'd be a pretty honorable thing to say? Here's the greatest preacher that ever walked the face of God's dinner.

God in the flesh made some cults of Bible backwards and forwards like nobody's business. Here's a man that could walk into an auditorium and immediately every head was turned right towards him. And that's why he could get up in Luke chapter 18 and he could preach out of Isaiah chapter number 61.

And then look at those people and say, this day is this prophecy fulfilled in your ears. And I mean, it was like kids in the candy store. I mean, they were eaten out of the palms of his hands.

Never a man speaks like this man. You think John the Baptist was a preacher? I'll tell you what, Jesus Christ was the greatest preacher that ever walked this earth hands down. But they didn't say, Lord, teach us to preach.

Now, it seems like to me, since they were enrolled in the seminary of the Lord Jesus, if you will, that they would have said, Lord, teach us some of your tactics and some of your homiletics and some of your outlines. But they didn't do that. They didn't even say, Lord, teach us to teach.

But yet the Bible does say that Jesus taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes and the Pharisees. Why did he have such authority? Because he preached the word of God. He didn't fiddle around with a newspaper, the Sports Illustrated, the Time magazine.

He preached that same for Lord and that's what gave him that authority. But they didn't say, Lord, teach us to preach. They didn't say, Lord, teach us to teach.

They didn't say, Lord, teach us to build big Sunday schools. They didn't say, teach us to baptize people. And you know what? They didn't even say, Lord, teach us to perform miracles.

Now you think about that. They're around somebody who performed every miracle imaginable. I was thinking about this just the other day around Christmas time.

I preached a sermon on what if God really became a man. By the way, he did and his name was Jesus. But nonetheless, you think about all the miracles that Jesus performed.

Did you know there is not one miracle that Jesus did not perform upon this earth? Not one. You cannot think of a miracle that you would have wanted him to do that he didn't already do. He raised people from the dead.

That's a pretty noble thing. He walked on the water. He calmed the storm.

You say, well, he never did a miracle of financial proportions. Is that right? Peter needed to pay his taxes. He said, go down to a fish's mouth, hope it wasn't a catfish and you'll find you some gold in there.

That's a pretty big miracle if you ask me. I ain't got too much gold in the catfish's mouth. That's for sure.

And if I knew it was down there, I'd be fishing every single day. That's for sure. He said 5,000 on one occasion, 4,000 two chapters later.

I mean, you think about it. He healed blind eyes, the paralytic legs. He cast out devils from people's bodies.

He did miracle after miracle after miracle after miracle after miracle. And the disciples saw every single one. You remember that man that laid in a bed for 38 years? He said, no man would put me in the water.

No man cares for me. And he said, I need somebody to get me down there in the water. And Jesus said, don't you worry about that water.

I'm the water of life. And Jesus walked by and touched him and said, pick up your cot, boy. And he picked up the cot.

And the Bible says he went straight from the loom of Darwin all the way down the road, friend. He picked up his bed and he carried it with him. And I'll tell you, every single miracle that Jesus performed, the disciples saw him perform them.

Hey, you remember those four guys that had that friend who was a paralytic? He laid in a bed and he couldn't even walk. He couldn't get up and do anything for himself. And one day they took him to the church house.

They took him to somebody's house as they would meet in houses customarily in the New Testament. And I mean, the doors were packed to capacity. I mean, people were all over the place.

I mean, there wasn't a place to sit. And those fellows said, I wonder what we're going to do. And one of them got a bright idea.

He said, well, let's hoist him up on the roof. Now, you can't do that nowadays. You'll get sued, but back then you could.

He said, let's hoist him up on the roof and let's lower him down. And we'll put him right on the platform where the man's preaching. And so they climbed up there.

They got a shovel, a pickaxe, whatever it was. They started taking the shingles off that roof. And before you know it, they opened up a bigger hole, a hole big enough for a cot.

And they lowered that man right down in there. And Jesus didn't rebuke him. Jesus didn't slap the man.

Jesus said, son, take off thy belt and walk. And the Bible says he picked it up and walked right out of the room. And you know what those religious people said? We never saw it on this life before.

They said, we've never done things like this before. We've never taken the offering like that. We've never preached like that.

We've never seen it on this life before. And every miracle that Jesus performed was a miracle that was seen by his disciples. And so doesn't it stand to reason? It does to me that, hey, if I was around him, I'd say, hey, you know what? I sure would like to have that power.

I'd like to be able to raise the dead. And you talk about an influx of crowds at a meeting, buddy. I mean, didn't he tell somebody, he said, here's somebody with a spit rag.

And I mean, he's got 50,000 people to preach to. And I mean, here is somebody who could give you that power available at his fingertips was the very power to say, OK, if you want to raise the dead, you can raise the dead. And he did give them some apostolic power.

And by the way, when the apostles died, apostolic power died with them. And there's no such thing as an apostle today. That's why we don't handle snakes.

That's why we don't speak in tongues. That's why we don't walk on water. That's why we don't do foolish things.

Because at one time, the power of God came through manifestations. But nowadays, the power of God comes through simple obedience to the word of God. And so when they looked at Jesus, they didn't say any of those things.

They said, Lord, keep us. Why do you say that? I'll tell you why. Because if you study the Gospels, you will find out that all of Jesus' ministry, every ministry, all of his miracles were attributed to his prayer line.

And you see, friend, they did not have to ask and say, Lord, teach us to preach. Show us how to teach Sunday school. Show us how to build the cross.

Show us how to win people to Christ. Show us how to baptize the masses. Give us this miracle working power.

They didn't have to ask for any of that because they knew where the source of all of that came from. It came from his prayer time with his father. Excuse me for being a little bit over elementary.

But if Jesus had to pray, how dare we think we shouldn't? John chapter number 17, Jesus prayed and prayed and prayed. We know that in the Garden of Gethsemane, he prayed so vigorously, it was as if sweat drops of blood. The capillaries beneath his skin would burn.

And physicians call it hematidrosis. It's only happened about four or five times in medical history. And every single time it happened to a person, their body was under so much stress, anxiety and pain.

That's exactly what happened to the Lord Jesus as he was praying for your soul and my soul near into that time of death. You study the ministry of the Lord Jesus. Every single miracle he performed was attributed to his prayer life.

And when the disciples saw that, they realized if we want this great power, we must learn the submissive principle of being obedient to our father, being obedient to the word of God. And we must learn to pray. Daniel chapter six and verse number 10.

Now, when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his bedchamber with his windows being opened toward Jerusalem and he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and gave thanks before his God as he did a full time. Psalm chapter five, verses one, two and three. The Bible tells us that David prayed at morning, noon and at midnight, lifting his eyes and his hands toward heaven.

He was waiting for God to drop it right out of the sky. Jeremiah chapter 33 and verse number three. Call unto me, God said.

Not a shallow promise, but a great promise in the word of God. Call unto me and I will answer thee and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not. You say, OK, preacher, how come we don't see great and mighty things? James chapter four, you have not.

Because you have not. The Bible says in the book of Matthew chapter number seven, ask and it shall be given you. Seek and ye shall find.

Knock and it shall be opened unto you. Somebody says, OK, preacher, I've asked. I've sought and I've knocked.

But ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to remind you that it's written in the continuous ten. It means ask, ask, ask. Knock, knock, knock.

And seek, seek, seek. And you keep on seeking and you keep on knocking. Just like that widow that came to that judge and she begged him and begged him and begged him.

And finally he said, OK, I'll give you what you want. Now I'm going to tell you something about prayer. Prayer is not just a time so that I go to God and say, I want this, I want this, I want this, and I want this.

God is not your theological bellhop that meets you outside your hotel room with a limousine. He's not going to jump to your every beckoning call. And prayer is not just a time for me to ask for things.

It is a time for me to worship God. Ladies and gentlemen, people that prayed in the Bible were people who had the power of God. But not only does the power of God come through prayer.

I'll say secondly and quickly, number two, the power of God comes through seriousness. The Bible says in Leviticus chapter 11 and verse number 44, And be ye holy, for I am holy, saith the Lord God of hosts. God liked that verse so much he repeated it again.

In 1 Peter chapter 1 verse number 16, And be ye holy, for I am holy, saith the Lord God of hosts. And if you study your Bible from Genesis 1-1 to Revelation 22-21, it won't take you very long to figure out that God, more than love, more than grace, more than mercy, more than patience, more than long suffering, more than anything else, God is holy because that is the very thing that makes God who God is. If he were not loved, he would still be holy.

If he were not merciful, he would still be holy. If he had no grace that we heard sung about tonight, he would still be holy because holiness is what God is, and you know what? God commands holiness out of his people. Now, God has always had his blessings upon separated Christianity.

Now, the liberals don't believe that. The modernists don't believe that. The New Evangelicals don't believe that.

And guess what? They don't have God's blessings. You see, ladies and gentlemen, those who want to live right, those who want to live holy, those who want to live separated lives are those who avail themselves to the power of God. They can prove that, liberals can.

There's a man in the Bible by the name of Samuel. He was born in Judges chapter number 13. His life was lived in chapter 14, chapter 15, and chapter number 16.

Did you know in Judges chapter number 14, the Bible says five times, the Spirit of God came mightily upon him. In chapter number 15, the Bible says four times, the Spirit of God came mightily upon him. And in chapter 16, the Bible says two times, the Spirit of God came mightily upon him.

Why do we have that gradual slowing down, that backsliding process of the man Samson? I'll tell you why. Here's a man who, by the way, did not have the power of God because he was a hippie. He had the power of God.

His long hair was a symbolization of his Nazarite vow of separation to God. The hair was merely a picture of his vow and his separation. You see, God's always blessed separated Christianity in the Old Testament.

And he certainly blesses it in the day and age in which we live. But did you know when Samson lived right, when the Spirit of God came upon him, he could do some of the most supernatural, amazing feats that you could ever imagine. Here's a man that picked up the gates.

The gates of the city there that the Philistines had encamped and come around the Israelites, he picked them up and carried them to the top of a mountain and set them down. I mean, I had trouble carrying purity milk crates up the top of a mountain. And here's a man that grabbed the gates, put them on his shoulders and went up there and set them down.

Here's a man that was sitting on a rock one day and a thousand Philistine soldiers came to him. He said, God, I'm going to have to whoop these fellas. And the Bible says the Spirit of God came upon him.

He picked up the jawbone of a donkey. The jawbone of a donkey and flew a thousand men. I'm going to be honest with you.

I do not think, I don't think I should kill a thousand men with a machine gun. I think a gang of men could do anything to one man they wanted to. I mean, they could get you down.

They can kick you, spit you, beat you. They can do anything they want to. And here's a guy that picked up a little jawbone of a donkey and killed a thousand people.

Well, that's not somebody I want to mess with, that's for sure. And when he was done, he was thirsty and said, Lord, I'd like to have something to drink. God reached down and the Bible says put a hollow place inside of that jawbone of that donkey.

There was another time that he found out that the Philistines had double-crossed him. So you know what he did? He went out into the wilderness and he caught 300 foxes. Can you imagine that? I don't believe if I went out hunting for six months, I could catch three foxes.

And here's a man that went out in one night and caught 300 of them. You say, you're foolish to believe that. You're foolish not to because it's right there in the Word of God.

He caught 300 actual, physical, actual foxes. Hey, and if that don't be all, he tied their tails together. Man alive, I tell you what, that confuses me every time I read.

He took 300 foxes. Now, be still, boys. You stay right there, boys.

You stay right there. And he took 300 of them and tied all of their tails together and then lit some torches. The Bible calls them firebrands.

And struck those torches between the tied tails of those foxes and sent them into the field of the Philistines. That's the first time in your Bible you read about taillights, by the way. But nonetheless, here is a man that had the power of God.

Now, there's no doubt about it. I mean, we could pass out the little sheet tonight and we could say, check, yes, check, no. Dig fast and have a power of God.

And it would take a pretty naive person to write on their note. We know he did because over and over and over and over again, the Bible says the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him. The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him.

When did the Spirit of the Lord come mightily upon him? I'll tell you when. When he began to flirt around with the world and he lost his peer. When Delilah said, OK, if you really love me, you'll tell me all of your parts.

And there's something about the way that she said it. There's something about those eyes that she kind of magnetized and then drew him in real tight. And so he told her the truth.

That night, the Bible says, I mean, after all these other foolish things, it seems to me like Samson would have figured it out. I mean, every single time she did something, she wrapped him in vines. She wrapped him in robes.

She braided his hair. She did all kind of silly things and said, the foolish things be upon you. He jumped up.

He had the same power that he always had, had the same strength that he always had. And it just seems to me like Samson would have caught on. But there's just something about this woman that made him completely, totally ignorant and oblivious to the problems and troubles around him.

Kind of like when your wife comes to you and says, honey, will you please give me the credit card so I can go to JCPenney? No, you shouldn't do it. But there's just something about the way that she acts that makes you have to do it. You know what I'm talking about, fellas? Okay.

And so here's this lady and she said, please tell me where your strength lies. He said, okay, never been a razor touched my head before. You shaved the seven locks of my head and my strength to go from me.

And she knew in her heart he was right. Now, the problem was he should have never been that soliciting woman to begin with, according to the word of God. He was living a life of immorality.

He involved himself in something he knew was against the vow of separation that he made to God. But he allowed pleasure to get in front of power. Didn't bother him anymore.

And you find him at the end of chapter 16 as a blind man. His eyes have been gouged out with a Philistine hot poker. Now he's grinding mills in a Philistine camp somewhere.

And we find out there towards the end of his life, he prays that God would forgive him. And he says, let me die with a Philistine. And he pushes in those pillars.

And the Bible makes a great statement that he flew more in his death than he ever did in his life. But here's a man who mightily had the power of God until he began to part with the world. Ladies and gentlemen, I've met so many people who think to themselves, I'll not be one of those numbers.

I'll not be one of those statistics. I can fudge a little here, and I can look at this, and it really doesn't affect me. Oh, it does affect you in a much bigger way than you think, ladies and gentlemen.

You see, those who work in computers, and I'm pretty much computer illiterate. Those who work in computers tell me that they have a little statement, they have a little deal that they call GIGO. G-I-G-O.

It means garbage in, garbage out. You put garbage in your mind, you'll get garbage out of your mind. You put garbage in your family, you'll have garbage out of your family.

What? You will reap what you sow. And so when they say garbage in, garbage out, GIGO, you know what I believe? I believe God's people need a good dose of BIBO, amen? Bible in, Bible out. You put it in, it'll come out.

Just be automatic. It'll be natural. And here was a man who wanted to live for God, but all of a sudden his pleasure and his pride took precedence over the power of God, and he lost his purity.

Therefore, he lost his power. And you do not see that phrase over and over and over again as you do in those early chapters that the Spirit of God came mightily upon Samson. Why? Because those who desire the power of God are those who do their dead level best to live a life of joy.

Now, please don't misunderstand me, friends. Anybody in this room is going to be perfect, including myself, and I'd be lying if I told you anything. There's areas of our life that we're going to have to fix.

There's areas of our life that we're going to have to change. Nobody's perfect. Somebody said the only reason the Pope thinks he is is because he's not married.

If he was married, his wife would tell him different, that's for sure, because mine tells me every day. But I'm going to tell you something right now, friend. You will not be perfect, but you will want to be different.

You'll want to be holy. And I don't care if they call it old-fashioned. They say anything they want to say about me, but I believe a person that wants to be pure will walk right, they will talk right, they will dress right, they will sit right, they will look at what's right, listen to what's right.

I don't care how old they are. I don't care how young they are. I don't care what their theological upbringing is.

If somebody wants to be holy, if they want the power of God, they will desire purity in their life. And they're going to be pure. And so, number one, I believe the power of God comes through prayer.

Number two, I believe the power of God comes through purity. But number three, I believe the power of God comes through the pages of God's Word. You see, if you're not in the name of God, I promise you one thing, you're not in the will of God.

I'll say it again, just in case you didn't get it. If you're not in the Word of God, you're not in the will of God. David said in Psalm 143 and verse number 10, Teach me to do thy will.

How are we taught the will of God? John 16, the Spirit shall lead you into all the truth. As we say in the courtroom, this is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And ladies and gentlemen, if we really have a heartbeat for God's power, if we really want God's influence in our life to influence other people, we are going to have to be people that read the Bible.

Now understand, I am not a monk. I'm not saying that you've got to wear a robe that drags the ground and you've got to sit in your bedroom for 24 hours, one day out of the week, and you've got to read and read and read. That is not what I'm saying, but you do need to be a student of the Word of God.

I was telling Pastor in the Robertson family today over lunch, I was telling him this morning about the man that brought, I believe it was, 50, 48, 50, 52, somewhere around in that area. He brought about 50 people to the revival meeting, and you know what happened when we gave him that leather Bible? He kissed it. That's the first thing he did.

I mean, for the whole, for the 200 people in that church, he took it and gave it a big old kiss right there across the front where it said Holy Bible. What do you think? I wouldn't kiss my Bible. That's why you don't have a fire of God either.

Because people all over the world are begging for Bibles and you won't even read the one you've got. We've got them laying all over the house. You know, I've just got a 40-foot traveling trailer, but I've got them too.

I've got 15, 20 Bibles in that little traveling trailer. I mean, we've got them on the coffee table. I mean, we've got them in the pew racks.

We've got them on the pulpits. We've got them on the microwaves. Hey, some of them even got them in the backseat of your car and they've been there so long the sun doesn't dry right under the cover and it's all lifted up like that.

People over in China lose their life for three pages of the Word of God. We've got 791,328 words that we don't care anything about what's said. And we wonder why our churches are so stale.

We wonder why we're so stagnant. We wonder why our kids are living for the devil and they don't live for God. We wonder why, for example, the school that I went to, I wonder why 1995 is the last class that birthed a preacher boy.

I wonder why that is in our Christian schools. I'll tell you why. Because we've lost our love and respect and fear, reverence and admiration for the Lord.

It's become a book to us, friends. You see, there used to be a time in our churches when we had a book that we loved. I mean, the preacher would get up and I mean, we'd open our Bibles and I mean, we'd follow along and we'd enjoy it.

And we'd get home and we'd, as in Acts 13, we'd bring people to Bereans and search the Scriptures daily to see whether those things were so. I mean, we'd get in the Word of God and I mean, we'd study. But you remember when you first got saved? I mean, you couldn't even hardly read the Bible without big watermelons tears rolling up your eyes.

And I mean, if you wrote in the Bible, that was it. You couldn't read the whole page. You had to buy a new Bible.

Because I mean, you smeared that stuff just all over the Bible. I mean, all over the page. I got the very first Bible I ever got after I got saved.

And I'm telling you, I go back to that thing, and I'll be honest with you, I read some of the things I wrote in that Bible and I think, man, I was a 16-year-old heretic is what I was. I mean, I said some of the most ridiculous things, but you know what? Man, I was sincere. Man, I didn't know a Bible from a phone book when I first got saved.

I'm telling you, I wanted to devour it. I mean, I wanted to read it. I go back and read some of the things I wrote.

I believe it was foolish, but I'm going to tell you, I learned and I grew through those times. And we talk about growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, 2 Peter 3, 18. How are you going to grow in grace? If you're not in the Word of God.

We're going to have to get back to the place where it's not just a little kid's song, but we're going to have to get back to the place where we believe the B-I-B-L-E. Yes, that's the book for me. I stand alone on the Word of God.

The B-I-B-L-E. Now, I don't have to argue with people if I've got a perfect Bible. If you don't think I have a perfect Bible, that's fine.

I know I've got a perfect Bible and you've got a right to be wrong if you want to. I know the Word of God is true. I know it's right.

I know it's a liberal state. I know it's a modernist state. I know all of them say, well, there's no way you can have a copy of a perfect Bible.

Well, they may not have one, but I've got a Bible that's complete. I've got a Bible that's inerrant. I've got a Bible that's infallible.

And you know what? I don't have to waste my ministry arguing about that. I know it's the Word of God. Whether you believe it or not, whether you like it or not, whether you want it or not, that's fine.

The ball's in your court, but I know I've got the Word of God tonight, friend. And I'm telling you, it's a book that needs to be precious to God's people. It is a book that needs to be loved and revered.

And as David said in Psalm 119, verse number 11, I'll have the Word of God in my hands. And I might not sin against God. 2 Peter chapter 2 and verse number 15, study.

You say, well, that's a preacher verse. No, that's a Christian verse. Study to show thyself approved unto God.

A workman, see, it's work to study the Bible. A workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth. Now, you know, if God tells us we're to rightly divide the Word of truth, then does it not stand to reason, ladies and gentlemen, that some people can wrongly divide the Word of truth? And that's why our churches and the messes are in.

Because we are more content to divide the newspaper and the Sports Illustrated and the Time Magazine and the Reader's Digest and just content to let our Bible sit on a shelf. And the only reason we bring them to church is because it matches a new outfit we just bought at the shopping mall. And I'm telling you, friends, we're going to have to get back to the place where we devour the pages of the Word of God.

Please, please don't tell me that you want God's power. But you never get into the book because those who are serious about the power of God are those who are serious about this Bible. Much more could be said, but for time's sake, we must move on.

Number one, the power of God comes through prayer. I believe the power of God comes through a great admiration for the pages of God's Word. I believe it comes through purity, wanting to live a holy and righteous life.

But I also believe the power of God comes through a passion. You see, I learned something when I was in Bible college. Dr. Ron Comfort used to say this little phrase all the time, and he meant it about everything.

You get what you go after. If I heard him say it once, I heard him say it a blue jig in time. You get what you go after.

You get what you go after. And you know what? I'll be honest with you. If you want the power of God, it's available to you according to what the Bible says.

And if you really want God's power, you think God's going to stand up in heaven, he's going to kind of twirl his thumbs, stick around, pop a can, and say, you know what, I think I'll play a good old round of hide-and-go-seek with them. When they seek me, I'll not let them find me. When they want the power of God, I'll make them weep and squall a bucket of tears, but I'll never give it to them.

I'll just sit up here and have myself a heavenly laugh. I'll just sit up here and I'll laugh and I'll enjoy their suffering and their temptations and their thoughts. No, if you want the power of God, according to my Bible, it is a promise, it is a fact that you can have the power of God.

Think about something just for a moment. For time's sake, please don't turn there. One of my favorite chapters in the Bible is Philippians chapter 3. I believe, as a matter of fact, and my memory serves me correct, when I was here last year, I preached the message on Wednesday night.

Keep your eyes on the prize. Philippians chapter 3, verse 1 through verse number, I think, 14. Apostle, I preach to the Lord for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded, verse 15, and if anything you be otherwise minded, God shall reveal His goodness unto you. And I remember I told you this, and I suppose that maybe you remember, maybe you don't, but you know what the theme of the book of Philippians is? It's joy. Four chapters.

That's it. Four short chapters and 17 times the Apostle Paul uses the word joy or rejoice. Over and over again, rejoicing the Lord all the way, and again I say rejoice.

He told those people to have joy in God. Now, how could Paul write about joy? Whenever he was writing this, he was not in the Hilton High Rise Hotel, but he was on the stony jail cell, cold, rat-infested, rope-crawling floor of a Roman province prison. How could he write about joy? I think I could write about joy because he said in Philippians chapter 3, verse number 10, that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his son, being made confirmable, same word of Romans 8, 28 and 29, being made confirmable unto his death, if by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.

What is it, ladies and gentlemen, that made the Apostle Paul the man that he was? If I could ask it this way, what made him? This past Easter, the Robertson family and myself, we started a revival meeting at the Friendship Baptist Church of Tennessee City, Tennessee, this little town outside of Dixon, basically Dixon, just a little suburb of Nashville, way out a little bit. And I've been there on several occasions, and the pastor has left since then for good reasons, and went to another church, but we were there, and we had one of those early Easter morning services around 6.30, 7 o'clock, something like that, and had their regular service at 11, whatever it was, those Sunday schools and the evening service, and we went on through the week, and we'd have a great time. Wednesday night, Thursday night, one of those little mid-of-the-week type of nights.

We was at the back, and we were shaking hands, we were thanking people and saying, God bless you for coming, and folks were coming by buying books off the table, and tapes off the table, and things like that. And this man came by me, and I know him, and I feel him. Matter of fact, I was in a meeting in that area not too long ago, and he showed up.

We had a Sunday afternoon service, and this guy showed up. He's a good friend, but he scared me just a little bit that afternoon, that's for sure, that evening. And so we was out there, and he was shaking my hand.

God bless you, brother, I appreciate it so much. And he's patting me on the back. I don't mind people patting me on the back.

And the first patting on the back, had a suit on, and I'm getting all ready to get out the door, and I'm just kind of talking to people, God bless you, God bless you, God bless you, trying to shake everybody's hands, trying to be cordial to everybody, tired, a little bit weary from preaching. And so this guy starts shaking my hand, starts patting me on the back. Then he kind of goes down the middle of my back, and he's like, just kind of patting me on the back.

And I'm thinking, okay, you've patted me on the back enough, God bless you, I know you appreciate the message, now go home. And I said, you know what's this guy doing? Well, I have my coat unbuttoned, you know, and it's kind of free, and I always talk with my hands, as you can imagine, as you can tell. And he took the back of my suit coat.

I mean, it's a gospel truth. He took the back of my suit coat and lifted it up just about to my head. And I'm thinking, huh, okay, mister, I've never hit a man in the church, but I'm just about coming well-nined to it, amen.

So he lifts up my jacket, he takes his hand, runs it up the back of my jacket, starts patting me on the back. And I turned around and I said, please tell me what you're doing. And he said, I'm looking for your wind-up mechanism.

He said, I'm looking for that little spot that your wife just kind of cranks you up and lets you go before you can preach it. You know what? Philippians chapter 3 and verse number 10 was Paul's wind-up mechanism. It was his crank.

But I may know him, not know about him. We know a lot about God, but that's not going to get us anywhere. He said, but I may know him and the power of his resurrection.

And by the way, he didn't stop with just the power of his resurrection. He said, and the fellowship of his suffering. You know, Paul told God's people, if you're going to be a person that knows much about the power of God, you're going to be a person that knows much about heartache.

You're going to be a person that knows much about loss, and anxiety, and yes, sometimes disturbance, and hard times. And I'm not going to go into all the details and all the illustration, all the ramifications, but I'll tell you something. And I was a little bit mad about this, and I was a little bit mad about that.

And you remember last time I was here, I was struggling with my voice. Well, that had a lot to do with it when they said I had the nodules and all that stuff. And I didn't know when I was here then.

I found out in August. And I'm going to tell you, me and Don had a little fight, buddy. And I got back there, and I was pulling fist punches with God.

And I was arguing about this, and saying, hey, I don't believe this, and I don't appreciate this. And I'm telling you, as an evangelist, as a full-time evangelist, I gave God the runaround. I was upset, hands down.

And by the way, I got on the footpath that night on the camp, and I preached. And I preached just like I always did, and I wasn't no more right with God than a bum on the street. I knew I didn't have the power of God that night.

I just got up and preached a little old Microwave sermon at some youth camp that I preached before there at Camp Kittak in Wisconsin. And I'm telling you, I was struggling in my heart. I knew I wasn't no more right with God than anything.

And I was mad, and I went back home that night, and I was still upset, and I was still mad in my heart. And I told God, you know, I get up and say, hey, you're not supposed to tell God why. And that's real good preaching until you go through a trial.

But it's real easy to say, hey, trust God, until you go through a trial and you've got to trust God. But when the rubber meets the road, that's when it's real preaching. And I got back there, and I'm telling you, I was... Now, I do not believe in coincidence, but I do believe in providence.

At that time, I was just nominally reading through my Bible, reading a few things. And I was reading a book that I've read, I don't know, three, four, five times. It's called The Pursuit of God by A. W. Tosin.

You ever get a chance to grab that book, you ought to pick it up. It's one of the best books you'll ever read in your life. Now, it's deep.

You don't sit down and read it in one night. I mean, it ain't a coffee book. I mean, you read it, and I'm here to convict you and wear you out, and you better have a highlighter and an ink pen, because, buddy, you'll be writing 90 miles to nothing when God gets ahold of you when you read that book.

It's probably, outside of the Bible, it's hands down. There's no problem about it. It is hands down the greatest book I've ever read in my life.

It's challenged me, convicted me, and changed me more than any other book outside the Bible. During that hard time in my life, I was going through that trial, and I came to a particular chapter, and I began to read. You know what A. W. Tosin said right in the middle of that book? I wrote it right here in the trial.

It's my Bible. I'll never want to forget it. He said, it is doubtful, you hear me and hear me well, it is doubtful that God will ever use a man greatly until he hurts a man deeply.

You know what Paul said? Paul said the same thing. I want to know Him, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His grace. And Paul said, no matter what it takes, no matter how my heart breaks, they can spit, they can laugh, they can scoff, that is fine.

But Paul had an undying passion to know God like that. You know what? You can read your Bible every day. You can pray every day.

You can try to live the holiest life on the face of God's green earth. But if you have no passion for the power of God, it will all be routine, ruthless. You're going to have to want the power of God from Him.

You're going to have to have a passion. You're going to have to go on a quest as the heart passes after the water, and the heart will so pass my soul after the old God. Psalm chapter 42, verse number 2. David said, I will be satisfied when I awake with thy lightening.

Now that's an interesting verse for you. David said, I won't be satisfied until I look in the mirror and look just like Jesus. He said, I won't be satisfied until my passions are fulfilled and I know that the power of God is upon my heart.

Hey, what's your passion? You want to make a lot of money? That's fine. Have every dime of it. You want to have fancy houses, fancy cars? Ain't nothing wrong with having things, but it's much wrong when things have you, and you don't want the power of God, and you want things, and you want this, and you want fame, and you want fortune, and you want prestige, and people always got to recognize you, people always got to reward you.

What is your passion in life? Do you really want the power of God? Now you hear me, and you hear me well, and don't you miss the word that comes out of my mouth. If you want it, you can have it. And I give you this lesson, and with this we close and we go home.

I believe the power of God comes through perseverance. You see, as you keep reading through that joy chapter, don't you find out? Paul said, I press. I'm not a Greek scholar.

I'm not a Hebrew scholar. I do know a little Hebrew. He runs a laundromat here in Danville.

But nonetheless, I don't know how to Hebrew, and a lot of Greek. To be honest with you, I struggle with English, and that doesn't take a very long time to figure out what I'm preaching, that's for sure. But as I study, they tell me that the Greek word there for press is the word agonizamon.

You know what I mean? It means I agonize. I sweat. I bleed.

I frighten. He says I lose sleep. I lose money.

I lose all of these frivolous things of life for one reason. I press for the march, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And the Bible says, let us therefore as many as be perfect, or complete, mature, be thus minded.

And if anything, you be otherwise minded, God shall reveal this unto you. He said, listen, I have a passion for the power of God, but what good is that passion going to do me if I don't persevere, if I don't live for God every day? Can I remind you your Bible does not say in the book of Proverbs that a just man falls twice and gets up again. It doesn't say a just man falls four, five, or even six times, but it says seven, the number of complete.

He falls seven times, he learns from his mistakes, he dusts himself off, and he goes on with God. He keeps trusting, he keeps living, he keeps preaching, he keeps praying, and yes, he falls all over himself. And Paul said, when I want to do right, I do wrong.

When I don't want to do wrong, I still do wrong. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian life is a fight.

The Christian life is a struggle. The Christian life is warfare. And the power of God is available to those who will persevere, who will stay in the fight, who will stick with the battle, and who will continue until the trumpet sounds.

And friend, we need some people with some, excuse me, stick-to-it-iveness, if you will. Some folks who stick to it. Some folks who don't just kind of drop by and just kind of drop in on God every now and then when they need some problem fixed.

Not some demon Christians, but some devoted Christians. I'd like to read you a little something. I'm not real big on reading things when I'm preaching, but nonetheless, I'd like to read something tonight.

Matter of fact, I found out that you have this on one of your church bulletin boards. And you can be studious and you can find where it is. But they gave me this when I was in Bible college, and I don't ever want to forget it.

I've tried to memorize it, and it just seems like to me there's some things easy for me to memorize, but there's other things it's not. Maybe I've not applied myself very much. But I'd like to read this to you.

It's actually very fitting for the trip that I just took, because it was written by a young pastor, a native pastor, over in the land of Africa. Not the very same country I was in, but another country, the country of Togo. And he wrote this, and I believe it sums up everything I've said tonight in a nutshell.

And with this we pray, and we're done. So my commitment as a Christian. He says, I am a part of a fellowship of the unashamed.

I have Holy Spirit power. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line.

The decision has been made. I am a disciple of Christ. I will not look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still.

My past is redeemed. My present makes sense, and my future is secure. I am finished and done with long living, sight walking, small planning, smooth means, colorless dreams, pain vision, mundane talking, cheap living, and dwarf goals.

I no longer need preeminence, nor prosperity, tradition, promotions, products, or popularity. I do not have to be right. I don't have to be first, top, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded.

I now live by faith, lean on his presence, walk by his patience, lift up my burdens in prayer, and labor by power. My faith is set. My gate is fast.

My goal is heaven. My road is narrow. My way is rough.

My companions are few, but my guide is reliable, and my mission is certainly clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversity, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the throne of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I will not give up, shut up, let up, until I have stayed up, stood up, prayed up, and paid up, preached up for the cause of Christ, because I am a disciple of his. I must go till he comes, give till I drop, preach till all know, and work till he stops me. And when he comes for his own, he will have no problems recognizing me.

The color of my banner will be quite clear. And I'm telling you, ladies and gentlemen, that is New Testament Christianity. And that's the mindset of a person who has the power of God.

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