

The Spirit of Power

by Samuel Chadwick

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Spirit of Power in the life of the believer and the Church, and highlights the need for intensive faith and a strong spiritual life to experience this power.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:29, Zechariah 4:6, Luke 9:1, Luke 10:17, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:4, 1 Corinthians 2:4, 1 Corinthians 4:20, Ephesians 3:20, 2 Timothy 1:7

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Christian Power"

Description

Samuel Chadwick preaches about the two different aspects of power in the New Testament, one representing authority and the other effectiveness, emphasizing the importance of understanding the distinction between the two. He delves into man's instinct for power, highlighting the strong desire for sovereignty and the consequences of seeking power for self-realization rather than through humble trust and obedience. Chadwick discusses the promise of power through the Holy Spirit, explaining how power is essential for fulfilling one's destiny and inheritance, and how the Spirit of God empowers believers for effective witnessing, holiness, and service.

Transcript

There are two words for power in the New Testament, one of which stands for authority and the other for force. Much confusion has arisen from the failure to distinguish between them. Just as the two words for perfection stand respectively for completeness and consummation, so the two words for power stand for authority and effectiveness, right and efficiency. The Revised Version has been more careful to preserve the distinction than the Authorized, but it has not been so successful as might have been expected; for instance, in St. John 10:18, where our Lord speaks not of His ability, but of His authority to lay down His life and take it again. Both words are used in St. Luke 9:1: "He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases." When the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us in Thy Name, He said, Behold, I give you authority over all the powers of the enemy" (St. Luke 10:17-19).

Man's Instinct for Power

Man wants power. There is probably no instinct of the human heart so strong as the craving for the sovereignty of power. Might is the attribute of God most coveted of men. Satan snatched at it and fell, and the same craving was the undoing of the human race. "Ye shall be as God," was the appeal that prevailed; and its success was in the fact that it appealed to the craving for sovereignty. Man was made for thrones

and dominion. He knew it He snatched at it and fell. Even then the instinct for power remained. It is the dominant passion of the human race and the key to its history. The determination to possess it is responsible for more than half the bloodshed of the world, and its urge has been the dynamic of civilization in all ages. The kingdoms of this world are built on the love of power. Babylon stands in the Bible for the symbol of human ambition. The Tower of Babel was to reach unto Heaven, and make for its people a name that should endure for ever.

"Thou saidst in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; and I will sit upon the mount of congregation, in the uttermost parts of the earth. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High."

Babylon is not a geographical term, and its spirit is still with us.

Man was meant for the heights. God made him for sovereignty, and he cannot fulfill his destiny without power. God destined him for a Throne; Satan promised him a kingdom, The difference between God's purpose and Satan's promise is a difference of method and purpose. The kingdoms were not the same. Neither was the way the same. God's way is the way of Grace; Satan's is that of lawlessness. God brings it as a gift, for which man must wait in patient obedience and humble trust; Satan bids man snatch at it, demand it as a right, and take it. The devil's doctrine has always been that might is right No authority must stand between man and his will. Animal instinct, the gratification of desire, the passion to have and to know, are declared to be the only justification man needs for taking what he wants, provided he has the power. Satan's way to thrones and dominion is by the assertion of self for self-realization; God's way is by the surrender of self on the altar of sacrifice. Calvary is God's way. In the Kingdom of Heaven the Bleeding Lamb is in the midst of the Throne. and in the midst of everything else that abides. The way of sovereignty is by the way of the Cross. The badge of authority is service, the mark of distinction is humility, and the right to rule is the power to obey. God's way gets there. The other ends in the ditch and the pit.

The Promise of Power

Man needs power. He is of no use without it Dominion is impossible without authority, and authority is useless without power. Man must have power. It is his supreme need. Without power he can do nothing. He needs it for both character and inheritance. He cannot be what he was made to be, and be cannot do what he ought to do, without the right to command and the power to accomplish. The gift of power was the last promise of our Lord and the first declaration of the Spirit.

"Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

Our Lord promised that the indwelling Presence of the Spirit of God should be in men the all-prevailing source of Power, The Spirit of God is always associated with energy and vitality. He brooded over the chaos of the world and brought it into order and under control. He was God's gift to man at his creation, and it was "the Breath of God" that distinguished man from the rest of His creatures. During the period recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures the Spirit was given to men chosen for special tasks. The prophets foresaw an age in which He would be poured forth upon all flesh and spake of His coming. Jesus manifested the Spirit as He revealed the Father. By His Promise the Spirit was to succeed the Son with increased effectiveness and enlarged dominion. For that reason it was better that He should go away.

The gift of the Spirit is God's gift of power, for effective witnessing, holiness of life, and consecrated service. It gives authority, aptness, and force in speech. On the Day of Pentecost they spake as the Spirit

of God gave them utterance. They spake with authority, certainty, and power, because they spake out of an experience of revealed truth interpreted by the Holy Ghost. The power of the keys follows a Divine revelation of God in Christ, and no man has a right to speak for God who has no personal, first-hand knowledge of Him: he certainly will not speak with power. The Spirit of power sanctifies, vitalizes, energizes the natural faculties, and makes possible things beyond their most perfect development. God's man becomes mighty in the power of the Almighty. Personality is the seat of power, and the Pentecostal gift of the Spirit is the gift of a God-possessed personality.

Power in Personality

The gift of the Spirit is a gift of personality. It turns ordinary persons into extraordinary personalities. That is the miracle of Pentecost.

Personality is the discovery of the age. It is not easy to define, but there is a certain currency of ideas and words that give it high rank in all modern thinking. It is meant to imply more than a person. It is a person of distinctive quality. Remarkably enough, the New Testament never uses it. God asks for persons, and turns them into personalities. It is a quality that counts. "For Shamgar slew six hundred Philistines with an ox-goad, and saved Israel; but the men of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle." The reason was not in the weapons, but in the men. Personality is the supreme power. Superior to heredity, stronger than environment, higher than prestige, mightier than adversity, a man's personality conquers, compels, commands. It gives distinction in art, effectiveness to energy, and character to life. In all the work of the world it is personality that counts, and everywhere it is held that the qualities of powerful personality are: courage, strength, sympathy, and sanity. Not one of them can be spared, and I do not know that the order can be changed.

Now "God hath not given us the Spirit of fear; but of power, and of love and of a sound mind." The gift of the Spirit is a gift of personality that possesses man's spirit, quickens man's faculties, sanctifies man's powers, and empowers him for all the will of God.

The Bible nowhere uses the word Personality. It is difficult to imagine how it could be written without the word, but it was. God never asks for personalities. They are the first condition with us in all enterprises that call for power. God asks for persons. There is no Divine quest for supermen. He calls all sorts of people and chooses quite ordinary men and women for His great work. He somehow calls persons, and makes them personalities. He gives power. Our Lord said to His disciples: "Behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you: tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high."

To be clothed means something more than to be covered. The Holy Spirit of God clothes Himself with sanctified humanity, and in Him sanctified humanity is clothed. He fits in with every element of personality, gives power of expression to every faculty, shines in illuminating power upon every theme in reason, conscience, and heart, and brings to pass the ideals, desires, and purposes of God in heart and life. Every kind of power comes in the Spirit: intellectual power, moral power, spiritual power, and physical power. That is the Personality of Pentecost. There is no higher quality of man anywhere, and he can be produced everywhere by the Power of the Holy Ghost. He is the Spirit of Truth the Spirit of Holiness, and the Spirit of Power. He quickens the mind, purifies the heart, and strengthens the whole man.

Power! Power belongeth to God, and in the gift of the Spirit He makes all grace abound to us, that we, having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work. Power! All things are possible to those who have power. Power! The supreme need of man and the crowning gift of God is Power: power to

conquer, power to attain, power to achieve. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Power.

The Laws of Power

All power is conditioned. A very little thing will stop a motor-car, silence thousands of spindles, or plunge a city into darkness. Spiritual power is subject to conditions. Once it failed in the hands of the Apostles. The same chapter that tells of its gift tells how they tried to cast out an evil spirit from a demoniac lad and could not.

The power of the Spirit is inseparable from His Person. God does not let out His attributes. His power cannot be rented. It cannot be detached from His presence. He strengthens by indwelling. Spirit works through spirit. He is not simply the Giver of power. He wields it. No one else can. It is His power working in us that makes us all-powerful for all the Will of God. Is it not in this we so often fail? Is there not often in our praying for power more desire for IT than for HIM? Is it not possible to be more anxious for the achievements of power than for the Spirit of Power? We want visible results, dramatic wonders, mighty works; and it is not always for these the Spirit of Power is given. Power may be as necessary for silence as for speech, and as mighty in obscurity as in high places. He comes to make us effective in all the will of God. In the one Spirit there are diversities both of function and manifestation.

The work of the Spirit depends upon the power of the Spirit. No other power will do. The energy of the flesh cannot do the work of the Spirit For His power there is no substitute. When Zion covets Babylonish gold, envies Babylonish garments, copies Babylonish ways, adopts Babylonish altars, and fights with Babylonish weapons, Her strength fails because the Spirit of Power is lost. Carnal resources are no asset in spiritual enterprise. The weapons of this warfare are not carnal. Prayer brings power, for the Spirit of Power is given to them that pray. Testimony is a chosen weapon of conquest, and the Spirit is given for witnessing. He does not save by argued abstractions, but by living witnesses who testify with power out of the personal certainty of a living experience. It is by the power of the Spirit there comes conviction of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The work of the Church is supernatural. It cannot be done in the strength of the natural man. "It is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." There is no excuse for failure, no justification for ineffectiveness, for the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Power, and the gift of the Spirit is the inheritance of every believer in Christ Jesus our Lord. "He that is feeble among them at that Day shall be as David; and the House of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them."

Where is the Spirit of Power?

The atmosphere of the Apostolic Church is charged with Divine Power. Their word was with power. Conviction accompanied their speech. Signs and wonders confirmed their testimony. They uncovered the hearts of evil doers, and Heaven put its seal upon their judgments. Rulers trembled in their presence. The dead heard their voice. Disease fled at their touch. Devils were subject to their word. The presence of the Spirit endued men with Divine authority and power. They were sure of the mind of God, for they were taught of the Spirit. They asked and received, for they prayed in the Spirit. They wrought mighty works, for they were strengthened in the might of the Spirit. The normal life of the Church was filled, inspired, and empowered in the fullness of the Spirit of the living God.

The study of Pentecost reveals a startling contrast between the Promise of Power and its absence in the Church of today.

Judged by its own standards of power, the Church is not effectively doing its own proper work. This is the conviction of devout and thoughtful men in all the Churches. Why? Where is now the Lord God of Elijah? Where is the Spirit of Power that raised the dead, cleansed the lepers, cast out devils, and transformed men into saints and heroes of God? So far as external conditions can be judged, they are more favorable to the work of the Spirit than they have been for many years. There is a revolt against materialism and rationalism. There is an intense belief in the reality of the spiritual world. All these things have opened a great and effectual door to the witness of the Holy Spirit of God; and yet the Church has less power than in the days of aggressive antagonism. Why? is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Forsyth as usual puts his finger on the spot when he says: "The arrest of the Church's extensive effect is due to the decay of its intensive faith, while a mere piety muffles the loss." There is no substitute for the Holy Ghost. The sufficiency of the Church is not of men, but of God. The one vital cause of failure in the Church is in the poverty of the spiritual life of its people.

As the Holy Spirit was straitened in the human body and the earthly ministry of our Lord, so is He straitened in the Church which is His Body -- with a difference. There were words the Spirit could not yet speak and works He could not yet do, but there were no limitations of unbelief, unresponsiveness, or disobedience in Christ, whereas in the modern Church there are conditions that make His work difficult, and sometimes impossible.

All the causes of our failure go back to this one common source: Do we believe in the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, the Lord and Giver of Life? Is it not true that there are many who have not go much as heard that the Holy Ghost has been given? Without His guidance wisdom gropes in darkness, and without His strength there is no might. Light becomes darkness, and strength weakness apart from Him. There are many who would save the Church by linking it up with the powers of the world. Christ was the Good Physician Who healed by the Spirit of Life, but the modern Saviour is an Engineer who will redeem by organization and accommodation. The salvation of the world is "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit. saith the Lord of Hosts." There is no straitening in Him. The reason of our failure is not in Him. He is straitened in us. Is He straitened in me?

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/samuel-chadwick/the-spirit-of-power/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net