

# (Come Up Higher) the Place of Power

by Zac Poonen

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of revelation and faith in experiencing the power of God in our lives.*

**Duration:** 54:35

**Scripture:** Matthew 11:25, John 17:3, Ephesians 1:17-18

**Topics:** "Biblical Transformation", "Spiritual Growth"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of truly understanding and internalizing the word of God. He compares studying the Bible to studying subjects like mathematics or chemistry, stating that simply memorizing and regurgitating information does not lead to true understanding or life transformation. The speaker highlights the need for the message of the Bible to penetrate the heart, not just the mind, in order to bring about lasting change. He also encourages listeners to pray for the enlightenment of the eyes of their hearts, referencing the Apostle Paul's teaching to the Ephesians. The sermon concludes with a powerful analogy of how believers becoming children of God makes Him rich in a way that material possessions cannot.

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## Transcript

So, we continue our study, titled, In the Heavenly Places. Yesterday we saw that he has blessed us, Ephesians 1.3, with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. There is not a single blessing of the Holy Spirit which is not already put to your account in the heavenly places.

Everyone has been put to your account, whether you go and collect from the bank of heaven or not, that depends on you. Whether you go to the bank of heaven and cash the cheque, or whether you keep the cheque framed up in your house and remain poor, that's up to you. But it's all been put to your account.

And the other brother who is more spiritual than you, the other sister who is more spiritual than you, the only difference is that he went to the bank and cashed those promises of God, and you were hesitant to go. That is the only difference. It is God's work from beginning to end.

God is doing His work in such a way that no man will ever get any glory. See, if salvation had something to do with our effort or our intelligence or our ability to grasp truth or understand doctrine, then those who are clever would have an advantage. And if that were the case, you know, some people think like that, you need to understand everything clearly, you need to have a lot of intelligence to understand the Bible.

Now, if that were true, then Jesus would have gone to all the colleges in Israel to select His disciples. He wouldn't have gone to the seaside to pick up fishermen. Some of them didn't even finish high school.

So that is the clearest proof that in the kingdom of God, it's not intelligence or knowledge or being able to explain things. No, it is a heart matter. In the kingdom of God, we understand in the heart.

What we hear goes through our ears, what we read goes through our eyes, goes through our mind, and if it gets stuck there, we are still going to build on sand. It must come through the eyes and the ears, through the mind, and sink to the heart. Then we have built on rock.

A lot of Christians allow the word to get stuck in their mind, and it's still sand. Even get excited about it, emotions, it's still sand. It's only when you allow it to sink down to your will and say, Lord, I'm going to believe that that's going to be true in my life, and by faith I'm going to step out, then you build on rock.

So yesterday we saw in the heavenlies is the place of blessing, and today we want to see that in the heavenlies is the place of power. We read in Ephesians chapter 1, Paul says, I pray for you. Verse 18.

First of all, in 16, he says, I make mention of you in my prayers, and what is he praying for them? He's not praying that they'll be rich or healthy or any such thing. He did not believe in the health-wealth gospel. He believed in something a million times greater than that.

He says, I pray, verse 17 of chapter 1, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, will give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him. See, to know God is eternal life. And it's very interesting what he says here.

I pray that God will give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. Revelation is a New Testament word. It's different from understanding.

And he says here, I pray the eyes of your heart will be enlightened. Now, if Paul's prayer was that their minds would be enlightened, then he doesn't need to pray. Then all he needs to do is to tell them, please read what I'm writing 10 times.

You still don't understand it, read it 20 times and you'll get it. You know, it's like studying social studies or geography or history. You didn't understand something, read it again, read it again, read it again.

Now, I'm absolutely convinced that the vast majority of Christians who say they have a quiet time and read the Bible every day, it is not going beyond their mind. They don't pray that the eyes of their heart will be enlightened. They read, they read some more, they read some more and they got the facts in their head.

They can win Bible quiz competitions. It doesn't mean anything. Paul prayed that the eyes of their heart will be enlightened.

We see something in our heart. I really believe that many Christians have not seen some of these things. And that's why their lives are still so defeated.

Doctrinally, they are right. If you give them a doctrinal statement, they'll sign it. Yeah, that's correct.

Everything they believe. But somehow in their eyes of their heart have not been enlightened to see the hope of their calling. To see what a wonderful calling I have been called by.

It's one thing to understand it in their head. And I'll tell you even as you hear me, please remember, you are only getting it in your head. It must sink down another one foot to the heart, then it'll change your life.

And I fear that in many of our conferences, we hear and a little while it stays in our mind and then it goes away. You must pray that the eyes of your heart will be enlightened. And if Paul could have taught this to the Ephesians, I mean, Paul was a much greater servant of God than any of us.

And if even he could not explain this to the Ephesian Christians, I don't believe I can. We speak and then we pray. I don't have time to show you this, but there's a time in the Gospels where Jesus asked his disciples, in Matthew 16, he said, who do you say that I am? And Peter replied, you're the Christ, the son of the living God.

Now, if you compare that passage with a parallel passage in the other Gospels, you'll see something which is not found in Matthew. And that is that Jesus was praying. What was he praying for? Before he asked that question, he said, Father, please reveal to these people's hearts who I am.

And then he asked the question. And Peter answered, you're the Christ, the son of the living God. And Jesus said, Simon, you're blessed because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you.

Any one of you who preaches God's word, either in a pulpit or in private conversation, sharing God's word with others, please follow the example of Jesus, that you will pray that their eyes will be enlightened to understand in their heart what you're saying. If you convince them in their mind and they say, yeah, yeah, yeah, I agree with you, they could still go to hell and never become spiritual. The eyes of your heart be enlightened, Jesus prayed for that, Paul prayed for that.

Even to Timothy, who was his closest co-worker, he once says these words in 2 Timothy chapter 2. It's quite a challenge. He says, 2 Timothy chapter 2, verse 7, Consider what I say, the Lord will give you understanding. In everything.

He says, Timothy, you've been my closest co-worker for 25 years. And I know you don't seek your own. You're a wonderful servant of God.

I'm sorry to say, even to you, I cannot give you understanding. I can share the truth with you. But whether you understand in your heart depends on your own eagerness to seek after God.

See, it's not like studying mathematics or chemistry. There, if you have a good teacher who explains on a blackboard and you've got good intelligence, you grasp it. And if he explains it three, four times, you've got it so well that you can teach others.

And this is how many people are studying the Bible today. They hear a message, they go to our website and listen to the message, take down their notes and go and preach it in their churches. It doesn't mean they've understood it in their heads.

It doesn't change their life. It won't change anybody else's life. We have seen many people in our churches who've understood everything that we preach.

But look at their family life. They're still yelling and screaming at each other. What have they understood in their heart? Zero.

What have they understood in their head? Plenty. The same applies to every truth of scripture. In the Old Testament, it was not like that.

See, the Old Testament was law. You did not need revelation to understand the law. You just had to have a good mind.

And they were called scribes and scholars, brilliant people who spent their life studying. They didn't have to pray. If you ask them anything in the law, how do I offer a sin offering, they'd give you the absolute details.

How do I offer a thanksgiving offering? They'd give you the details. What must a leper do if he feels the leprosy has gone away? What's the procedure? You didn't need revelation. You just needed a good mind that could study Leviticus, study Exodus, and you could have the answer.

That's Old Covenant. And I want to say, like I've said many times, many Christians live under the Old Covenant. And that's why today also the emphasis is on knowledge.

Look at all the Bible colleges. I have never heard of a single Bible college that emphasizes revelation. You don't get marks for revelation.

You get marks for study. You get marks for intellectual study. In the Old Testament, all the false prophets came out of the Bible schools.

They had Bible schools in the Old Testament. I think it was Samuel who started it. And he started it because it says in those days there were no prophets.

There was no vision, and the word from the Lord was rare. You read in 1 Samuel 3 verse 1. And so he decided to start a school of the prophets. Presumably it's not written, but we assume it is that, because by the time it comes to the time of Elisha, you read about the school of the prophets.

Those are Bible schools. And they got their certificates and their diplomas, and they got a job in the king's palace as reverend so-and-so with such and such a degree. Every one of them were false prophets.

Not a single true prophet in the Bible came out of a Bible school. Not a single true apostle or prophet in the New Testament came out of a Bible school. And I believe in the history of the church.

It's the same thing. You don't get prophets from Bible schools, because Bible schools emphasize the head. And not only Bible schools, a lot of churches and a lot of preaching emphasizes the mind and the emotions.

None of them can make you spiritual. The apostles knew that what people needed was revelation. Have you got revelation on the hope of your calling? Oh, it'll change your life when you see in your heart something that grips you.

The Bible says that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man the wonderful things that God has prepared for those who love him. But the Holy Spirit, it says in 1 Corinthians 2, has revealed them to us. Revelation, Matthew 11 25, Jesus said, I thank you, Father, that you have hidden these things from the clever and the intelligent, but you have revealed them to babes.

When we talk about power, what Paul is praying here is, I pray that the eyes of your heart, Ephesians 1:18, will be enlightened, first of all, so that you know the hope of his calling. That means the wonderful calling you have is far greater than to be the Prime Minister of India or any calling such. I mean, if you see your calling, it'll make a tremendous difference to you, the sense of dignity with which you walk on this earth.

And the other thing is to know what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, or like I think it's the Living Bible which says, I want you to see how God became rich when he got you. Have you seen that? I mean, you probably have seen how you became rich when you got God. That's not what he's praying.

He's praying that you will see how God became rich when he got you. Now, you know, it's so difficult for us to understand that, and that's why so many of us feel inferior, insecure, condemn ourselves, and always feel we are good for nothing, and feel that God is always looking at us and saying you're not good enough yet, you're not good enough yet. You know what you need? You need the eyes of your heart to be enlightened, to see how God became rich when he got you.

The riches of the glory of his inheritance, not my inheritance in heaven, but his inheritance in the saints. That's something we've got to see. How God became rich when he got me.

I mean, you take a person, for example, who's a billionaire. They stop talking about millionaires now, it's billionaires. A thousand million rupees or whatever it is, billionaires.

Think of a man like that who's got property, and houses, and lands, and aircraft, and cars, and all types of things, but he doesn't have a child. And one day he gets a child. Boy, he has become really rich.

And if that little child could understand how that he, that little baby, made his father, who's already a billionaire, rich in a way that all his property could not make him, that's really something. That's a picture of what happens to us when we become born again. God who created the universe, who owns all the silver, and the gold, and all the universe, he became rich when he got me as a child.

I mean, whether you believe it or not is up to you. I believe it with all my heart. That's why my life is so happy.

I don't believe God's always looking down at me with a frown, saying, oh you're not good enough. No. I believe God's looking at me right now, and all the time, exactly like a mother who's picked up the first baby she had after 15 years of marriage, and looks at that baby.

That thrilled the excitement. That's how God looks at me, by the way, in case you didn't know. And that's how God looks at you, but the devil will ensure that you don't know it.

You need revelation. You need to ask the Holy Spirit to show you how God became rich when he got you. And the third thing he says is, I want you, the eyes of your heart to be enlightened, to know what is the fantastic power.

This is what I wanted to come to. The tremendous power which he exercises, not towards everybody, but towards us who believe. There's a very close connection in the New Testament between faith and power.

When the disciples could not cast out a demon, and they came to Jesus and said, why couldn't we cast it out? Well, the Lord had already given them the power in Matthew chapter 10. If you read Matthew chapter 10, he told, go, cast out demons. But seven chapters later, in Matthew 17, when a man brings his demon-possessed son to the disciples, they try, they yell, they shout, and they must have done everything that modern-day Pentecostal pastors do, and nothing happened.

And the man comes to Jesus and says, I brought my son to your disciples, and they couldn't do anything. Do you know the number of people who come to Jesus today and say, I went to your disciples and they couldn't help me? Because your disciples are more interested in a lot of other things in the world. They don't have a revelation of the power that is available to them in Christ, or they think that that's only for some full-time workers or some special people.

If you believe that, it'll be like that. You'll never experience the power of God. The power of God is available for every single person who will trust him.

I heard the story of a man in China who used to cast out demons, and people used to bring demon-possessed people to his house regularly. And one day they came to his house, and he wasn't there, but his 12-year-old son was there. And the 12-year-old son had seen his father cast out demons many times, so he said, bring him in.

And he rebuked the demon and cast it out in the name of Jesus. How many of you are older than 12 years? How many of you have read the Bible? How many of you have your hearts enlightened to see the mighty power of God available to you if only you will believe? That 12-year-old believed. That was the only difference between him and you.

You're scared of the devil. He wasn't. He was not scared of the devil.

He knew that Jesus had defeated him on the cross. He had seen his father rebuke demons so many times, and they'd go immediately. No devil can have power over you.

For so many years, the devil had power over man. And that's why in the entire Old Testament, the entire Old Testament, you never see anybody casting out a demon. You never see any person confronting Satan directly, not even one person.

But as soon as you come to the pages of the New Testament, you see Jesus casting out demons. And he said, if I cast out demons, he said, then the kingdom of heaven has come. I'll tell you, whatever amount of knowledge you may have of great truths and understanding of the Bible, you go into the villages of India, and if you can't cast out a demon, you won't be able to build a church.

That's for sure. All your knowledge, the devil's not scared of that. He's scared of a man who believes that God's power is available to him.

And that's what God wants you and me to be. Paul says he prayed for the Ephesian Christians, that their eyes will be opened, the eyes of their heart, to see the tremendous power available to them. And this power is the same power, verse 19, which brought about in Christ when the same power that raised Jesus from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.

So this is a power that lifts people up from the lowest gutter to the heavenly places. That's the mark of this power. There's a tremendous manifestation of power in creation.

You know, when God spoke a word, and the heaven and earth were created. That's how it was created. In Genesis 1.1, it only says that in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, but it doesn't tell us in Genesis 1.1 how God created the heaven and earth.

Then it says in the next verse that the earth got corrupted because of the fall of Lucifer. And then you read in the next few verses how God remade the earth. Not created.

It was created in verse 1 from nothing. But after it was created, when it was messed up by Lucifer's sin, he made it in six days. Just by the way, just to be accurate.

Many people are not accurate. You know, there's no verse in the Bible which says God created the earth in six days. Search through the Bible, you won't find it.

It always says he made the earth in six days. He created it in a moment, but after it was messed up, he made it. There's a difference between created and made.

Created is from nothing. Made is from existing material which got messed up because of sin. But how do we know that he created it with his word? Because that we get from Hebrews chapter 11, where it says in verse 3, by faith we understand the worlds were prepared by the word of God.

And that which is seen is made from things, is not made out of things which are visible. The entire universe was created by one word from God. And there's something wonderful about it.

And through the years, centuries, science has been discovering what God has made. There was a great scientist who said that science is thinking God's thoughts after him. Thinking God's thoughts after him.

That means God originally thought something and did something. And science is discovering that and thinking those same thoughts. Hey, this is how he did it.

It was made not with any big bang or something like that. People say it was not by evolution. But it was by God speaking a word.

And here in this verse in Hebrews 11, 3 it says, everything that we can see is made from things which are not visible. And about a hundred years ago, people thought that the smallest part of matter is the atom, which is seen with human eyes. And then people discovered, no, even the atom is not the smallest.

It can be split. There are electrons and protons and neutrons. You don't need to remember all that, but little smaller than that.

And then for years science, you know, science is always discovering more and more thinking God's thoughts after him. And then science discovered that electrons and neutrons are also not the smallest. There's a thing called quarks, Q-U-A-R-K, which is still smaller.

And they thought we got it. That's the smallest. And then science is now discovering even that is not the smallest.

It's still a theory. There's a thing called the string theory, which says that these quarks, they're little strings that vibrate in different frequencies. And that's what makes matter.

It's like the strings of a violin. And they are so small, we'll never be able to see it. If you want to compare these strings to an atom, if the atom were the size of the universe, a string would be the size of a tree.

See how small it is. But to me the wonderful thing about is that right at the bottom of the universe are musical strings. There's music.

I thought of that, you know, when it says in Isaiah chapter 6, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, the seraphim sing, the whole earth is full of his glory. I thought of that verse many times. I say, Lord, I don't see the whole earth full of your glory.

When I look into a garbage bin, do you see glory there? But when I understood what science is discovering, that there's music inside that garbage bin. In those little atoms inside the garbage bin are electrons and neutrons, and inside that are quarks, and inside that are these strings that are playing music to God. Science is discovering the mighty power of God.

That's science. But do you know that the greatest manifestation of God's power is not in all this, even though all this is wonderful. The angels get those little strings in the garbage can with music, strings that are praising God.

We are so blinded and deaf by sin that we can't hear it or see it. But there's something there. When our eyes are open, we see many things.

You know, we sing it in one of our songs, heaven above is softer blue, earth around is sweeter green. Something lives in every hue that Christless eyes have never seen. Birds with gladder songs or flow, flowers with deeper beauty shine.

Something lives in every hue Christless eyes have never seen. See, Christless eyes cannot see the glory of God, yet seraphs can see the whole earth is full of his glory, the way he's created it. And we see a little bit of it like in the beauty of a sunset.

But I want to say, having said all the manifestation of God's power, people have discovered now that you split an atom and you get enough power to give electricity to the whole of Bangalore. That's nuclear power, or enough power to destroy a city like Bangalore. And that power is in a small thing which is called an atom, which is still smaller, that's so small you can't even see it.

Think that God has put it like that, and here it says that's not the greatest manifestation of God's power. Do you think you're small? Do you think you're unimportant? Do you think, are you smaller than an atom? No. Think of the tremendous power there is in an atom to give light up a whole city.

Why can't he take you, who's bigger than an atom, and light up a whole city for Christ? He did that with the woman of Samaria. It's a matter of faith. According to your faith, it'll be unto you.

You say, Lord, I want everything that you can do through my one life. I want my eyes to be open to see the mighty power available, as it says here in verse 19, to us who believe. I'm one of those, Lord.

I'm one of those who believe that your mighty power can be manifested through me. That the devil will have no power over me. Sin will not have any power over me.

Every wretched habit will have no power over me. You know, there's a thing that a lot of charismatic preachers go around talking today about generational curse. They say, if your great-grandfather or your

great-grandmother dealt in witchcraft, that comes down to you.

Do you know what I call that? Garbage. That teaching. Rubbish.

And you've heard me explain this. There was a time when I was in a tree called Adam. One day, the Holy Spirit cut me out of that tree.

I don't know what my great-grandmother did, and I'm not interested, but I got cut out of that tree. And I got grafted into another tree by the Holy Spirit called Jesus Christ. And I'll tell you, there's no generational curse there.

Now, if you are not born again, if you have not been cut out of your old life in Adam, there are plenty of generational curses for you. But if you are born again, no demon can touch you. Imagine, there are charismatics who say that born-again believers can have a demon.

Can you be more stupid and blind than that? Great charismatic teachers teach that. And they psychologically work up believers to that place where they start vomiting and all that. Please don't be fooled by all this rubbish going on in Christendom today.

See the mighty power of God. The power of God is so great. What fellowship has light with darkness? What fellowship has Christ with a demon? How can Christ dwell in my heart and a demon as well? That is impossible.

And yet there are believers who think that a demon can get into them. I don't know how in the world they get these ideas. You know why? Because many people read Pentecostal magazines more than they read the Bible.

They watch Christian television more than they hear what God is saying to them. Well, then you deserve to be deceived. If you read Pentecostal magazines or any Christian magazine more than the Bible, you deserve to be deceived.

If you watch and listen to television preachers and television men and women more than you listen to the voice of God, I tell you, you deserve to be deceived. You listen to people who don't quote the scriptures. Have you seen these preachers? They'll start off with one verse and they go on and on and on with their psychological techniques.

They're very interesting to hear. Politicians are also very interesting to hear. We need a generation of people who study the Bible, who read God's word.

Power is in God's word that comes to us through the Holy Spirit. And our eyes need to see the mighty power available to us. When he raised Jesus up from the dead, raised him up to the heavenly places.

It is only the power of God that can raise you and me up to that heavenly places where I look down like we see in that picture where everything on earth becomes unimportant and small. You know, I have seen through the years, I have labored and tried to make people see that sex is not the greatest thing, money is not the greatest thing, honor, fame in the world is not the greatest thing. And yet so many believers who claim to be believers, who speak in tongues, go to charismatic churches or any other church, they are still so gripped by possessiveness to material things.

Do you find yourself possessive of material things? Do material things mean a lot to you? Do you want to buy and buy and buy and buy endlessly because you've got plenty of money? You haven't seen Jesus. It's no use my telling you. You've got to come up to the heavenly places and see the biggest skyscraper on earth is a small little thing.

But if you live on the face of this earth, no matter how much you hear these messages, you will still see everything in the world as big. But when you come up to the place where Jesus is in the heavenly places and only the mighty power of God can bring you there, then automatically you will see that these things are trivial. These things aren't important.

The opinion of men is just garbage. And if I have something, I can use it. If I don't have it, it's perfectly okay.

See, I believe that it's only through revelation that can happen. And very few believers have revelation. We hear, we understand, it doesn't make any difference to the way we live.

It doesn't make any difference to our attitude to money. Then we haven't got revelation. That's it.

But here he says, the greatest manifestation of God's power was when he raised up Jesus from the dead. So that teaches us this fantastic thing I told you about atoms and quarks and strings and the creation of the universe, which one word of God, he created all the stars and everything. All of that is nothing.

That was not the greatest manifestation of God's power. The greatest manifestation of God's power was when he conquered death. That's the thing here.

This is in accordance with the power which raised Jesus up from the dead, verse 20. So we learned something there. There's creative power of God and resurrection power of God, and resurrection power is greater than creative power.

That's what I want you to know. If I didn't have an arm, say God amputated, and the Lord did a miracle and created an arm for me, you'd say, boy, that's fantastic. This guy didn't have an arm and God created it.

That is creative power. And I would say 99.9% of believers, including most of us sitting here, would sit with our mouth open and say, boy, that is a manifestation of power. You know what you need? You need the eyes of your heart to be enlightened to see that that is not the greatest manifestation of God's power.

The greatest manifestation of God's power is when he lifts us up from spiritual death, resurrection power, when he delivers you from your anger and your lust and your bitterness and your love of possessions and your love to decorate yourself, you ladies, when he delivers you from that, boy, that is a manifestation of resurrection power. And that's greater than creation. I've seen it.

If I see, I believe God can recreate an arm. Jesus recreated blind eyes when he was on earth. He can do that even today.

But I'll tell you honestly, even if I see somebody's non-existent arm suddenly coming out there, it would not make me feel that that is the greatest manifestation of God's power or that the person who prayed for him is a great man of God. No, I can even believe that the person who prayed for him can go to hell. Because Jesus said people who do miracles in his name could go to hell.

But I'll tell you this, a man who has experienced resurrection power that has delivered him from sin, he can never go to hell. He'll have the highest place in heaven. But I've seen this.

99% of believers don't have a clue that resurrection power is greater than creative power of God. I don't know how many of you believe it. I don't know if the Ephesian Christians believed it.

When Paul was in Ephesus, they saw fantastic miracles. Handkerchiefs that went from his body touched people and evil spirits left and people were healed. They had seen tremendous manifestations of God's power in Ephesus.

You read that in Acts 19. But Paul writes to these Ephesians and says, hey fellas, I'm praying that your eyes of your heart will be able to see that resurrection power is greater than creative power. When you see that, your lives will be changed.

Resurrection power is the greatest manifestation of God's power in this universe. Here it is. And I pray, he says, that the eyes of your heart will be enlightened to see that this is the power that lifts you up into the heavenly places.

Now you can hear a message saying, look at things from God's viewpoint. That's what we saw yesterday. And you can struggle and say, okay, from now on I'm going to see things from God's viewpoint.

Is that the first time you heard that message? You probably heard it 25 years ago, but you're still looking at things from an earthly viewpoint. Why is that? Because it's not something you can manage. You need the power of God.

That's Paul said in Philippians 3.10. Oh, that I may know the power of his resurrection. Paul had a thorn in the flesh, which is a physical sickness, I believe, that weakened him. It didn't hinder him from doing God's work, but it limited him in some way.

He prayed to Jesus three times that he'd be taken away. And the Lord said, no, you need that to keep you humble. You who heal others, you will not be healed of this yourself.

You need that to keep you humble, but you will experience my grace, my power. Grace equals power. Turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 12 and verse 9. Concerning this thorn in the flesh with which Satan tormented me, do you know that Paul was tormented? Do you know the meaning of tormented? Tormented means plagued in the mind day and night, troubled.

And that's the word he uses in verse 8. God gave me a thorn in the flesh. It was given to me. Given to me means it was a gift.

Imagine when you get a gift wrapped up in a nice blue paper and ribbon and you open it and inside there's a thorn. That's what God gave Paul. He got a gift.

He opened the wrapping and he found it was a thorn. Thorn stuck in his flesh. And he said, Lord, is this messenger of Satan? He also calls it a messenger of Satan.

Can God give his greatest apostle, far more wholehearted than you and me, a messenger of Satan to torment him? And not only allow him, but that he prays three times to be delivered from the torment of this messenger of Satan and God says no. Is it possible? I tell you God's ways are not our ways. Why did he allow it? To keep him from exalting himself.

Please learn something from verse 7. Let me put it in these words. It is better to be tormented by Satan day and night than to become proud for one second. Did you get it? It is better to be tormented by Satan day and night than to become proud for one second.

How many of you believe that? If you believe it, it'll change your life. Pride is the sin that sticks so closely to us. Our besetting sin.

When you are young, a young man, 18, 19, you can think your besetting sin is sexual lust, maybe. But as you grow older, you'll find that the sin that sticks so closely to you, especially after you become a recognized believer in the church, is spiritual pride. It so easily besets you.

You try your best to avoid it and there you are, proud of something or the other, proud of something you did for God or that God did in you or something or through you or whatever it is. The sin that so easily besets us. Paul was honest enough to say, Hey, I was tempted to be spiritually proud.

Today, many people won't admit it and because they don't admit it, they never get delivered from it. You and I need to admit that we are in great danger of spiritual pride. Of course, if you are a half-hearted, lazy person doing nothing for God, you're not in danger of spiritual pride.

You're in danger of 10,000 worse things than that. But if you're living for God and you're a recognized brother in your church, let me tell you in Jesus' name, your greatest danger is spiritual pride. You elder brothers, there's nobody in your church who is as much in danger of spiritual pride as you.

You elder brothers' wives, you are in danger of spiritual pride because you think you're somebody. Because your husband is an elder. It's all rubbish.

Paul faced that danger. Why not you and me? And the only way that God could deliver Paul was how? Allow Satan to torment him day and night. To humble him so that he would not become proud.

You can't be proud if God allows Satan to torment you day and night with something. Don't blame people. That thorn in the flesh may be your neighbor, it may be somebody else, it doesn't matter who it is.

Thank God Paul has not told us what the thorn in the flesh was. But whatever your thorn in the flesh is, don't get angry with people. Don't blame people for what they did.

God has allowed Satan to torment you because he sees that you're in danger of spiritual pride. If he's not doing it, probably God has given up on you. God didn't give up on Paul.

He was determined to keep Paul humble. And I'll tell you this, if you allow God to do his work in you, he'll do everything in his power to keep you humble, even allow Satan to torment you. Because he knows that it's only when you're humble that you can get grace.

And grace is the greatest power in the kingdom of God. Just like money is the greatest power in the world, grace is the greatest power in the kingdom of God. And just like people pursue after money this earth, a person who's really got his eyes open to have the kingdom of heaven, he'll want more and more and more of grace.

And God gives his grace to the humble, so such a man will want more and more and more of humility. But that's the only way he can get grace. And if Satan has to torment me to make me humble, go right ahead.

I'm going to get more grace from God. That's what Paul said. I prayed to the Lord three times that it might leave me, 2 Corinthians 12, 8. And the Lord said to me, no, it won't leave you.

You'll be tormented all your life, Paul, because I want to keep you humble all your life. But my grace is sufficient for you. You'll be an overcomer.

You may physically have some weakness, but sin will not rule over you. You'll be under grace. You will conquer every sin.

You'll be a conqueror. Even though you're physically weak in some way, that people despise you for that physical weakness or sickness, but you'll be a conqueror in your spirit. Demons will tremble before you.

Isn't that good? And he said, my grace is sufficient for you because my power is made perfect only in weak human beings. God's power is not manifested in mighty human beings, it's manifested in weak people. And if God's power is not being manifested in you, let me tell you in Jesus name, it's because you're not weak enough.

You're too strong in yourself. You're too proud of your abilities and your cleverness. You won't get grace.

People look at you and say, oh, what a smart person. Oh, what a handsome, good looking person. Oh, what a person.

What's the use of all that? If the devil doesn't tremble at you, I tell you all your human qualities, you can throw it in the garbage bin. All your good looks and your intelligence and your position and all the rest of it counts for nothing. The devil's not afraid of these things.

He's afraid of humble people because they get grace and grace is equal to power. Nobody in the old Testament could experience this. Grace came by Jesus Christ.

And where does grace strengthen us? Hebrews chapter 13 and verse 8 says, Hebrews 13 and verse 8, it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace. And not by foods, meaning doctrines, not by certain doctrines, which have not benefited those who are preoccupied with those doctrines. Your heart cannot be strengthened with doctrines by grace.

That is the power that's available to us through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When God raised up Jesus from the dead, he lifted us up to the heavenly places. The heavenly places is a place of spiritual power, where demons fear and tremble at you.

I want to say to every one of you, you need to experience that power in your life. This is the power that comes through the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Some of you feel you're doing okay even without the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Let me ask you something. Do you think Jesus was doing okay when he was 29 years old? I'll tell you, he was doing much better than you are when he was 29 years old. He had never sinned for 29 years.

He knew the word of God when he was 12, the whole of the Old Testament. I'm sure if you had asked Jesus in some home meeting when he was 29 years old to share something, that would have been the most edifying thing you would ever have heard in your life. He was 29 years old and he was a carpenter.

He was upright, honest, he didn't love money, he was humble. Yet when he was 30, he needed to be anointed with the Holy Spirit. Some of you may think you're pretty good, you're doing pretty well without the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Maybe you are. Are you doing better than Jesus did at the age of 29? No. Then if he needed an anointing when he was 30, where do you think you are? Dear brother, sister, let me say this to you in love.

Don't be a prisoner to some theology that you grew up with. Break free from those traditions that bind you to something less than the mighty power of God. It's only the Holy Spirit, the mighty power of God, and that's the mistake of a lot of people who are anti-Pentecostal.

Anti-Pentecostal people are against the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the Pentecostal people, they speak of the baptism of the Holy Spirit for all experience. There are mistakes on both sides. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit continuously.

I prayed today that I would be filled with the Holy Spirit. I say, Lord, I can't speak if I'm not filled with the Holy Spirit. I can't depend on last year's experience or the last 40 years experience.

That's head knowledge. I mean, if I were a professor of mathematics, then I don't need the Holy Spirit. I just need 40 years of experience.

I can get up anytime and teach mathematics. And if I studied the Bible like I study mathematics, then I don't need the power of the Holy Spirit. I can teach the Bible anytime because I've got 40 years of experience teaching it.

And a lot of people are teaching the Bible like that. There's no freshness. There's no power.

There's no anointing. Because they're not hungry. They don't say, God, I need your grace at any cost.

Humble me at any cost. Give me grace. Give me power.

I believe the greatest manifestation of power is not in creative power, creating an arm, but in raising me up from the dead, that sin will not rule over me. That no demon can have any power over me. There's no self-condemnation.

There's no sense of, oh, I'm good for nothing. God always says you're not good enough. I don't have any such feeling.

God delights in me. God became rich when he got me. And if you think that is pride, that's not pride.

That's faith in what the Bible says. Don't let the devil say, oh, don't say such things about yourself. You're proud.

No, when you say what God says, that's not pride. That's faith. If God says, I'm a child of God, and I say, no, no, no, I'm just a sinner.

That's not humility. That's unbelief. If God says I can have the mighty power that came upon Jesus, I say, no, no, no, I can't have that.

That's not humility. That's unbelief. And it's the greatest insult to God.

And that's how a lot of Christians are living. And I want to try and deliver you from that unbelief. I hope I can deliver you for this morning.

I hope the Holy Spirit can open the eyes of your heart to see the tremendous power available to you. The same power that raised up Jesus from the dead. Why is that the greatest manifestation of God's power? Because the manifestation of the devil is not in cutting off somebody's arm.

The greatest manifestation of the devil's power is in death. Satan brought death into the Garden of Eden. First spiritual death, then death of the relationship between Adam and Eve.

You know how Adam started blaming his wife. You are the one. He told Eve, she's the one.

I don't care if you're a Christian or a speaking in tongues Christian, if you blame your wife, you've got spiritual death in you also. Oh, you are the one who misplaced the keys, not me. You're the one who always messes up things.

Brother, you need to be born again. I'll tell you that. Don't think you're born again.

You need to be delivered from this Adamic nature of pointing your finger at your husband or your wife. You need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Your head may be crammed with Bible knowledge, but you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit to be delivered from this wretched accusation spirit which belongs to Adam and the devil.

Have you been delivered from it? That won't come by creative power. It's by resurrection power. Satan brought death between husband and wife.

How many of you say you're believers and there's death in your relationship with husband and wife? You know what you need? Resurrection power. Not a new mindset, not what the psychologists say, call up your wife 10 times a day and say, I love you, honey. You can say all that.

It won't restore your relationship. What you need is resurrection power, the mighty power of God that delivers you from an accusative spirit, that delivers you from loving material things, from possessiveness. It will deliver you from every wretched thing that the devil put on Adam's race.

And the worst of it is death, physical death. No man has been able to conquer death. Death is man's greatest enemy.

It says in 1 Corinthians 15, read it, the last enemy that will be destroyed is death. You read that in 1 Corinthians 15? The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. So what is death? An enemy.

That's why I don't embrace death. I've seen believers when they grow old, oh, I'm just waiting for die to die. I'm just waiting for my enemy to take over.

What rubbish. I will never say that. I'll tell you, I'm not waiting to die.

If the Lord calls me home, that's fine, but that's another thing. I don't feel sorry for myself. Oh, this world is such a rotten place.

I'm waiting to die. Death is an enemy, 1 Corinthians 15 says, and I'm not to embrace it. I'm to resist it.

That's why I resist sickness. Every time I'm sick, I resist it. And I say, Lord, I want a little drop of your resurrection life now in my body, which I call healing.

Healing is one drop of resurrection life. We must ask for it. We must ask for God's power, even in our physical bodies, to serve him.

Do you know the Lord's Prayer? Give us this day our daily bread. What is that for? Physical health. He said, you pray like this.

Give us this day our daily bread. Okay, how many of you can tell me quickly, what is the petition that comes immediately before that, in the Lord's Prayer? Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and give us this day our daily bread. Meaning, Lord, I want to do your will on earth, exactly like the angels do it in heaven.

For that, I need strength. So please give me my daily bread. Is that why you're asking for healing? That's why I ask for healing.

I never get sick without asking God to heal me. Say, Lord, I want your power because I want to do your will on earth. I want your power.

Not only in my spirit, I want it in my body too. I want it in my mind. I want a clear mind.

Ask God for these things. Lord, when I read the scriptures, I want revelation from your Holy Spirit. I want power in every area of my life.

And because I'm precious to you, you'll give it to me. I'm God's favorite child. He will never deny me anything that he's promised in his word.

And you are God's favorite child as well. Why don't you get it then? The devil makes you feel, oh, you're so no, so it's not so good. You're so rotten.

You're good for nothing. You keep believing all those things and you'll never get anything from God. Tell the devil to his face, he's a liar.

And start believing in God and say, Lord, help me to see the hope of my calling. Help me to see how you became rich when you got me and give me some of your power. A little bit of it will do.

It'll change my life completely. It's not a new mindset. It's the mighty power of God through the Holy Spirit.

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