

The Power of God

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INTRODUCTION — HOW BIG IS YOUR GOD?

There are times in life when we come face-to-face with something bigger than we are. A problem we cannot solve. A relationship we cannot fix. A sickness we cannot heal. A past we cannot change. A door we cannot open. An addiction we cannot seem to overcome. A fear we cannot shake. And eventually we come to a place where we have to admit: “I cannot do this in my own strength.” But maybe that is not the worst place to be. Maybe that is the place where we finally discover the power of God.

Paul writes in Ephesians 3:20 that God is able to do “exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.” Think about that. Not just what we ask. Not just what we imagine. But above what we ask or imagine. And not just a little above it. Exceedingly. Abundantly. Above. That is the God we serve.

1. GOD’S POWER CREATED WHAT DID NOT EXIST

Go all the way back to Genesis. There was darkness. There was emptiness. There was nothing that looked like the world we see today. And God spoke. “Let there be light.” And there was light. God didn't need building materials. He didn't need machinery. He didn't need assistance. He didn't need someone to give Him advice. He spoke. And creation obeyed its Creator.

Psalms 33 tells us that the heavens were made by the Word of the Lord. Romans 1 tells us that creation itself reveals God's eternal power. Look at the ocean. Look at the mountains. Look at the stars on a clear night. Look at the human body. Look at life itself. All creation declares: “There is power in the hands of God.”

Dr. Jeremiah makes an important point when discussing God's omnipotence: the God who had enough power to create this universe also has enough power to sustain the people He created. And that changes how I look at my problems. Because sometimes I pray as though God is looking down from heaven saying, “I don't know, Stephen. That's a pretty difficult situation.” No. God has never looked at one of my problems and wondered what He was going to do. God has never panicked. God has never been overwhelmed. God has never needed a backup plan. God has never said, “I didn't see that coming.” He is God.

Jeremiah 32:17 says: “There is nothing too hard for thee.” Church, we need to get this settled in our hearts: Our God is able.

2. GOD'S POWER DOESN'T JUST CREATE — IT SUSTAINS

Colossians 1:17 teaches that in Christ all things hold together. Hebrews tells us that He upholds all things by the word of His power. In other words, God didn't simply create everything and then walk away. He sustains what He created. And that includes you.

Somebody may need to hear that today. God has been sustaining you. There were moments when you thought you wouldn't make it. But you're here. There were nights you didn't know how you were going to face tomorrow. But morning came. There were circumstances you thought would destroy you. But somehow, by the grace of God, you kept going. There were times when your faith became weak. There may even have been times when you walked away. But God was still working. God was still calling. God was still drawing. God was still sustaining.

Sometimes we only recognize God's power when something miraculous happens. But waking up another morning is the power of God. Being given another opportunity is the power of God. Having the strength to take another step is the power of God. Finding enough faith to pray one more prayer is the power of God. Sometimes the miracle isn't that God instantly removed the mountain. Sometimes the miracle is that God gave you the strength to keep climbing it.

There are parts of my own life where, when I look back, I know something for certain: I did not carry myself through that. God carried me.

3. GOD'S POWER IS OFTEN REVEALED THROUGH OUR WEAKNESS

This may be one of the most important lessons we can learn about the power of God. We often think: "If God is working in me, I should feel strong." Paul discovered something completely different.

Paul had what Scripture calls a thorn in the flesh. He asked God repeatedly to take it away. And God didn't remove it. Instead, God told him: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." — 2 Corinthians 12:9

Paul was essentially saying: "I asked God to remove my weakness, and God showed me that He could reveal His strength through it." Dr. Jeremiah has emphasized this principle in his teaching on God's power: one of the clearest demonstrations of God's strength can occur at the exact moment we become aware of our own weakness.

That is completely opposite to how the world thinks. The world says: "Become stronger." God sometimes says: "Depend on Me." The world says: "You need to have everything under control." God says: "Trust Me." The world says: "Hide your weakness." God says: "Give it to Me, and watch what I can do through it." There is freedom in being able to say: "Lord, I cannot do this without You."

Jesus said plainly: "Without Me ye can do nothing." But with Him? Paul says: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." My weakness does not disqualify me from the

power of God. Sometimes my weakness is exactly where I finally learn to depend upon it.

4. THE GREATEST DISPLAY OF GOD'S POWER IS THE RESURRECTION

If somebody ever asks: "How powerful is your God?" Take them to an empty tomb. Jesus had been crucified. His body had been placed in a grave. A stone had been placed over the entrance. From a human perspective, it was finished. The disciples thought it was over. The enemy thought he had won. Death appeared to have spoken the final word. But death does not get the final word when God is involved.

On the third day: Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Ephesians 1 speaks about the tremendous greatness of God's power and connects that power directly to the resurrection of Christ. The grave could not hold Him. Death could not defeat Him. Hell could not stop Him.

And here's where this becomes personal. Romans 8:11 tells us that the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in the believer. Think about that. The resurrection power of God is at work in His people.

So when you say: "My life is too broken." God says: Look at the empty tomb. "My marriage is hopeless." Look at the empty tomb. "My son is too far gone." Look at the empty tomb. "My daughter will never come back to God." Look at the empty tomb. "I've destroyed too much of my life." Look at the empty tomb. "My past has ruined my future." Look at the empty tomb.

Christianity is built around a God who specializes in bringing life out of things that appear dead. We worship the God of resurrection.

5. THE GOSPEL ITSELF IS THE POWER OF GOD

Romans 1:16 says: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation." Notice what Paul doesn't say. He doesn't say the Gospel contains some helpful advice. He says the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

The Gospel can do what education alone cannot do. The Gospel can do what money cannot do. The Gospel can do what government cannot do. The Gospel can do what human determination cannot do. The Gospel can change the human heart.

A person can walk into the presence of God carrying years of shame, bondage, anger, addiction, bitterness and regret—and Jesus can give that person a new life. Second Corinthians says: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." That is power.

I've seen people talk about recovery as though someone must carry the identity of their worst season forever. But that isn't how Jesus speaks about us. Jesus doesn't just help us manage an old identity. He gives us a new identity. The Gospel doesn't say: "You'll always be what you used to be." The Gospel says: "You have been made new." The chains may have been real. The addiction may have been real. The sin was real. The consequences may still be real. But the transforming power of Jesus Christ is also real.

There are things I know about God because Scripture tells me. And then there are things I know because I've watched Him do them in my own life. I know He restores. I know He forgives. I know He heals broken hearts. I know He brings people out of darkness. I know He can take someone the world has written off and say: "I'm not finished with you." That is the power of God.

6. GOD GIVES HIS POWER TO HIS PEOPLE FOR A PURPOSE

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He told His disciples: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me." — Acts 1:8

Notice why the power was given. Not so they could become famous. Not so people could admire them. Not so they could build their own kingdom. God gave them power so they could be witnesses for Jesus Christ.

And look at who Jesus gave that responsibility to. These weren't perfect men. These were men who had made mistakes. Peter denied Jesus three times. Thomas doubted. The disciples scattered when Jesus was arrested. They had experienced fear. They had experienced failure. But when the Holy Spirit filled them, fearful men became courageous witnesses. Why? Because the power didn't originate in them. It came from God.

That should encourage every person who has ever thought: "God could never use me." Maybe you're right about one part. You can't do it. But God can do it through you. You don't need to be the smartest person. You don't need the greatest education. You don't need the greatest speaking ability. You don't need a perfect past. You need a surrendered heart. God has always been able to accomplish extraordinary things through ordinary people who are willing to say: "Here I am, Lord. Use me."

7. GOD'S POWER WILL KEEP YOU

There is another beautiful part of God's power. He doesn't just save us. He keeps us. Paul said in 2 Timothy 1:12: "I know whom I have believed." Notice that he didn't say: "I know what I believe." He said: "I know whom I have believed." Christianity isn't merely knowing information about God. It is knowing Him.

Paul continues by expressing confidence that God is able to keep what has been committed to Him. Philippians 1:6 gives us the same confidence: The One who began a good work in you will continue that work.

Somebody needs to hear this: God isn't finished with you. You may not be where you want to be. God isn't finished. You may still have struggles. God isn't finished. You may have fallen down again. Get back up. God isn't finished. You may look at your life and see unfinished construction everywhere. God sees what He is building. The same God who started the work has the power to finish the work.

CONCLUSION — STOP MEASURING GOD BY YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES

Maybe we've been asking the wrong question. We ask: "How am I going to fix this?" "How am I going to overcome this?" "How am I going to carry this?" "How am I going to change this?" Maybe the better prayer is: "God, what do You want to do through this?"

Because Scripture doesn't tell me that Stephen has unlimited power. Thank God it doesn't. Scripture tells me something much better. My God does. When I am weak, He is strong. When I don't know the way, He does. When I cannot see tomorrow, He is already there. When I don't have enough strength, His grace is sufficient. When something looks dead, He is the God of resurrection. When someone looks too far gone, the Gospel is still the power of God unto salvation. And when I believe I cannot continue, He is able to sustain me.

So whatever you're facing today, remember this: Your problem has never been bigger than your God. Your past is not more powerful than His grace. Your addiction is not more powerful than His freedom. Your fear is not more powerful than His peace. Your failure is not more powerful than His forgiveness. Your weakness is not greater than His strength. And death itself is not more powerful than our resurrected King. The question is not whether God has power. The question is: Will we trust Him enough to surrender our lives to that power?

CLOSING APPEAL

Maybe you've spent years trying to change yourself. Maybe you've been carrying something you were never meant to carry alone. Maybe you know about Jesus, but you've never truly surrendered your life to Him. Or maybe you've followed Christ for years, but lately you've been depending more upon your own strength than His. Today you can simply say: "Lord, I need Your power in my life." Not power so I can become important. Not power so people will notice me. But power to live differently. Power to forgive. Power to overcome temptation. Power to love. Power to serve. Power to witness. Power to endure. Power to become the man or woman You created me to be.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, We come before You acknowledging that You are Almighty God. You created the heavens and the earth. You sustain all creation. You raised Jesus Christ from the dead. And Your Word tells us that Your power is still at work today. Lord, forgive us for the times we have made our problems bigger than You in our minds. Forgive us for depending upon our own strength. Teach us to surrender.

For the person who is tired, give strength. For the person who is afraid, give courage. For the person trapped in bondage, bring freedom. For the person who believes their life is too broken to restore, reveal the transforming power of Jesus Christ. For the believer who has wandered, draw them home. And for every one of us, fill us with Your Holy Spirit so that our lives become witnesses to the saving power of Jesus Christ. May people look at what You have done in us and know: Only God could have done that. We give You the glory. We give You our

lives. And we declare today that nothing is impossible for You. In the mighty name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

FINAL SCRIPTURE

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us... unto him be glory.” — Ephesians 3:20-21

The power belongs to God. The glory belongs to God. And our lives belong to God. Amen.