

POWER



My Power is Made Perfect in Weakness

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted, he has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Isaiah 61:1

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, *anointing me with power to do these things. I do not do them out of myself, but under the anointing of the Spirit.*

We are all aware that to get anything done in this world you have to have power. Without power you are soon left behind, sitting high and dry, while the world goes on its merry way, leaving you to starve to death, or to die of loneliness.

The world offers its own kinds of power:

The power of money
The power of public opinion
Political power... the ‘right connections’
The power of guns

The world knows nothing about *the power of God*, where it comes from, what it does.

For twenty centuries, whenever professing Christians have lacked God's power in their lives, they have turned to one or another of these four sources of this world's power for support.

We’ve done it ourselves. How many times have we turned to money for confidence! Or people’s good opinion? We've tried to establish the ‘right connections’. Some of us have even succumbed to the temptation to arm ourselves with guns.

It's true that we need power to survive, power to accomplish our kingdom purpose.

But kingdom power is power of a different order.

Jesus had power

He was meek, lowly of heart, but when Jesus came out of the wilderness temptation, and began to teach in the synagogues of Galilee, the thing that set him apart from every other teacher in Israel was his *power to heal and to free captive souls* from the principalities of darkness

When Jesus spoke, his word had power. When he stretched out his hand to touch the sick, there was power to heal.

It was not the power of money.

It was not the power of public opinion.

It was not the power of having the right connections.

Nor was it the power of swords and spears and guns.

Yet, wherever he went doors opened and chains broke.

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report concerning him went out to all the surrounding country.

Luke 4:14

What was this power of the Spirit?

He came to Nazareth where he had been brought up and he went to the synagogue as was his custom on the Sabbath, and he stood up to read and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, he has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Luke 4:16-19

The anointing of the Spirit that was on Jesus was without measure. But what's important to see is that this power did not just "zap" him in a capricious manner.

The Lord Jesus would be the first to tell us that this power was not his, but the Father's. It was imparted to him by the Father because he is in total submission to the Father's will.

When Nicodemus came to him by night and said "***Rabbi, we know you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these works which you do unless God is with him,***" he was saying, "I see God's power. I don't understand who you are, but I know that you possess a power which the rest of us lack."

Notice that Jesus did not say to Nicodemus, "Nicodemus, after all, I'm the Son of God. I've got an inside track. I've got something you're never going to have."

No, Jesus said: "***Nicodemus, you must be born again.***" I.e. "When you are born again, Nicodemus, you will understand where this power is coming from and you will have it too!"

When did this power descend upon Jesus?

It began at his baptism. When Jesus came out of the water the Spirit descended on him. He was now the Anointed One, the Messiah.

Why at his baptism? Because his baptism was *an offering of himself to the Father*. His baptism was the beginning of an awesome worship. His baptism was a death to his own will, the beginning of his crucified life, culminating at the cross.

He then was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. There his power was increased and refined. Because in the wilderness, Jesus *denied himself* in favor of his Father's pleasure.

It was a further death, an offering of himself as a sacrifice to the Father's will.

From that point on his ministry was drenched in power, and the source of this power was the *offering up of himself*, which continued daily, until Calvary.

You can only understand Isaiah 61, (***“His Spirit is upon me because he has anointed me...”***) if you see it in the light of Isaiah 53, ***“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed.”***

The power comes upon Jesus because he offers himself up.



From the moment Jesus offered himself to his Father at his baptism, until the moment he finally gave up the ghost and died on Good Friday, his entire life was worship.— an offering. He fixed his eye on the goal at the end of the road, where he offered everything up to the Father on the cross.

Jesus never wavered. His eye was single. He saluted no man on the road. He did not allow himself to get distracted. And he shook the dust from his feet whenever anybody tried to get him off the track, whether it was his mother, or the apostle Peter, or the scheming Pharisees. Jesus just kept moving forward.

They brought the colt to Jesus and threw their garments on it and he sat upon it. And many spread their garments on the road. And others spread leafy branches, which they cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed cried out, “Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed be the kingdom of our Father David that is coming. Hosanna in the highest.”

Mark 11:7

It looks like he's got it made.

He's got them eating out of the palm of his hand.

If he wants it, he can have financial power.

If he wants to he can now exploit public opinion.

With those crowds behind him, he's got political clout.

He can broker this power and take over Israel like Castro took over Cuba.

This is his opportunity.

But he ignores this "opportunity."

He doesn't reach out for money.

He doesn't push to take advantage of his "ratings."

He doesn't become a politician or a general.

He spurns it all for the only anointing that really counts —

— The anointing that brings real power...

— The anointing that's going to take him to a cross...

— The anointing that is going to lead him to offer himself up in an act of consuming worship to his Father on our behalf.



This was the power of Jesus' entire ministry.

This is why he could bring good news to the poor, freedom to the captives, sight to the blind, deliverance to the oppressed. This is why he inspired hope in the hopeless.

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come then through the greater and more perfect tent, not made with hands, not of this creation, he entered once for all into the holy place taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood thus securing eternal redemption For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and the ashes of a heifer sanctifies of the purification of the flesh, how much more should the blood of Christ to the eternal Spirit offer himself without blemish to God purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. (Hebrew 9:11)

This is not theoretical power, but very, very practical power. Power that can transform people who are slaves of guilt, victims of dead works, finding no peace... into sons and daughters of the Kingdom, people who are alive with joy, gladness, wisdom, and freedom, as they serve the Living God.

Yes, this power is in the blood.



“How much more should the blood of Christ...”

There is power in the blood, indeed, but be careful not to make the blood of the Lord Jesus into a fetish.

His blood has power because he offers himself up.

He offered himself at his baptism.

He offered himself at his temptation.

And on Palm Sunday as he rides the donkey down into the city like a king (which he is), he is on his way to the final sacrifice.

When that offering of himself gets hold of us, when it gets control of us, we are changed by it. When our hearts see the sacrifice and understand it, we are delivered from dead works to serve the Living God.

We are transformed from slaves to sons and daughters of the Kingdom.

We are caught up in worship of the Father as Jesus leads us into the Father's presence.

We are lifted by him into a foretaste of glory, and soon, we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice.

And in this offering of ourselves we enter the Lord's power.



“I appeal to you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, without spot to God which is your spiritual worship.” (Romans 12: 1)

"Offer yourselves up." he says to us.

Every day. All the time. Just like Jesus.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind that you may prove (demonstrate, show, manifest) what is the good acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:2)

The world says, “Indulge yourself. Pamper yourself. Coddle yourself. Gratify yourself. Conserve yourself. Take care of yourself.”

The Spirit of the Lord says, “Offer yourself. Offer yourself. Offer yourself”

“Lo, I come to do your will, O, Lord. In the volume of the book it is written of me,” says Jesus and we say it with him.

We’re coming to do his will. And to do his will means that we simply give ourselves, all the way, to him. All the time. This is not a single momentary act but a daily practice. The offering of ourselves means that we commit ourselves to live the life that Jesus describes in Matthew 5, 6, and 7—The Sermon on The Mount. The Sermon on the Mount becomes deadly legalism if we just try to make ourselves do it.

But the Sermon on the Mount, *when it is lived as worship, when it becomes an offering*, brings with it tremendous power.

"If you bring your gift to the altar (and the gift is yourself) and there remember your brother has something against you, Go! Leave your gift there and go and get reconciled."

Suppose we're worshipping, and it suddenly becomes evident to me that I'm not treating my wife right or my husband right, I've been walking around and spouting Bible quotes, while treating my spouse like a dog---or my fellow worker...or my employee...or my employer...or my neighbor...or my third cousin...

As I worship, I become aware of this. So I leave my gift and I go get reconciled— I make up my mind... I'm going to be reconciled to this person. I'm going to start making it up to them—my wife or my husband —I'm going to treat them with honor as the Lord has made clear to me.

Now we offer ourselves up and our worship becomes glorious.



As we are offering ourselves to the Lord we become aware that our eye is going off to the side. We are looking upon that man or that woman with lust or envy or devising a way to exploit that person for our own ends. Now we take our right eye and pull it out.

We put it under the blood. We confess it, so our eye is single.

Now we can worship.

We sing hymns in our worship that contain tremendous truths--- with tongues which have gossiped, exaggerated, murmured, complained. And now, we're saying, "Thank you, Jesus!" Yet, as we worship, it becomes evident that this tongue has to clean up its act. So we repent of our evil tongue, and as we cleanse our tongue before the Lord it again becomes possible to offer ourselves up to him.

Perhaps as we worship, we become aware that our attitudes toward the people who have wronged us are destroying us. We're bitter about this group, or that group, this race, or that nationality, the Media, the Republican Party, the Democratic Party, our union, or whoever we're angry with. With the Spirit's help, we begin to pray for the person, or the group that inspires our wrath. Now we pray God's blessing upon them. Suddenly we are set free to offer ourselves up to God in thanksgiving and praise.

Perhaps we become aware that our faith is actually less in God and more in mammon. So we repent. We know that we can't serve God and money too. We're going to recommit ourselves—we're going to offer ourselves to the kingdom, trusting that God will provide whatever money we need.

The source of our power is the offering of a clean, committed, holy life to God.

If we do this, his power becomes ours. It's a daily offering of our life.

When a fellowship offers itself to God in this way, that fellowship is anointed with unspeakable power.

The Spirit of the Lord is calling our churches to present themselves to God as a living sacrifice. To truly take up the cross and follow the Lamb with outpoured lives.

Arise, shine, for your light has come for the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

To arise and shine in response to his light is to present ourselves in worship to him. To rise up in the flame that comes down from heaven, and to give glory to God as the flame consumes us.

As we worship with our lives, we will have power.



Power that will move mountains, power that will break chains, power that will raise the dead, power that will heal the sick, power that will bring people from darkness to light and from Satan's bondage into God's glorious freedom.

Prayer- Holy Lord, forgive us for seeking power for our ends.. for recognition, for exploitation, for control. Instead may we be gripped by the beauty, by the holiness of you laying all power aside as an offering of love to the Living God. Oh Lord, get a hold of us, grab us, change us ...help us to understand what your offering truly means. Move us to offer ourselves as well... today, every day, every moment. Transform us, renew our minds so that our offering is sweet worship to you, to your worthiness and sovereignty. And yes, may we arise and shine as your glory falls upon us. May your holy flame consume us so that we may move in the only power that can break the grip of evil on our lives and on this world. Amen.

Maranatha Mirror

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THE LAMB
WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN