

A People of Power

Like many of you, I long to see the power of God poured out and made manifest as it was in the book of Acts. I know that we serve the same God and that He is unchanged in His purpose in regard to the earth. He still desires to incarnate Himself through the prayers and the labors of His holy people. So why do we not see His power in manifestation more often? From the outset I want to make it clear that more than we desire to see the power of God in manifestation, God longs to manifest Himself in power on behalf of mankind.

The Bible tells us that His power is available to do superabundantly, far over and above all that we dare ask or think—ininitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams. So where is this power and why do we not see it being made manifest to the degree and with the frequency that we desire?

Eph 3:16-21 AMP

16 May He grant you out of the rich treasury of His glory to be strengthened and reinforced with mighty power in the inner man by the [Holy] Spirit [Himself indwelling your innermost being and personality].

17 May Christ through your faith [actually] dwell (settle down, abide, make His permanent home) in your hearts! May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love,

18 That you may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints [God's devoted people, the experience of that love] what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it];

19[That you may really come] to know [practically, through experience for yourselves] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [without experience]; that you may be filled [through all your being] unto all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself]!

20 Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [ininitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams]—

Adam Clarke says in his commentary concerning this scripture, “We can ask every good of which we have heard, every good which God has promised in His Word; and every good in which we can think of, or imagine. This is goods and blessings beyond all that we have either read of or seen. More good than we can even imagine and there is no limit to our imagination; good to which it is impossible for us to give a name; beyond the limits of all human descriptions; even more good than God has specified in His word. God is able to do more for us than we can ask or think; and His ability here is infinitely tied to His willingness, for, of what consequence would it be to tell the church of God that He had power to do so and so, if we were not assured that He was willing to do what His power could perform, and what the soul of man needs to have done?” This is very thought provoking, but again, it only serves to whet our appetite without further satisfying our desire.

In studying this passage of scripture, I believe that it is imperative that we do not take this promise for power outside of the setting in which it was made. Please allow me to suggest a few possible reasons why we have not seen this type of power manifested in the modern church in any appreciable measure. Beginning in verse sixteen, we see that the power of God is something that you must first learn to yield yourself to. God’s power by God’s Spirit must first have its perfect way in you. You must yield yourself to the power of God’s Spirit. Only then are you made fit and are you able to handle that power and know how to administer that power in the lives of others. It is not enough to have a casual understanding that God loves you, it must be experiential. His love has changed you, it has transformed you. He has touched you and you will never be the same. I believe that too often we reduce ministry to something we read about, something that we go to school to learn. When we are given an opportunity to minister, we try to reach into our bag of tricks and pull out the perfect answer, the right remedy. Ministry is not superficial, it is in wrought. It emanates from the inside and is the product of the loving God doing a great work in your life. He must have a place to do something in you before He will ever be able to manifest Himself and His “power” through you.

The first and most obvious solution to why we have not seen this type of power being made manifest in and through the church could be that we are not keeping the first and most important prerequisite—and that is to walk in love. God cannot possibly invest the fullness of His power in our lives. We would take that which is meant to bless and use it destructively. First and foremost, we must be rooted deep and have a firm foundation in the love of God. His love must govern everything we do and every motive behind our doing. We must have experienced that love and know that love and walk in that love—then God can make this power manifest in our lives.

Another possible solution for why we have not seen the power of God in greater manifestation could be that we have simply hoped and believed for so little, desired and dreamed so small, or asked and prayed so far below the standards of God's own power that we have hindered Him in our lives. Because of our limited revelation of His love or His power as it is revealed in His Word, we simply do not have the faith to receive. I believe that un-belief is at epidemic levels in the church today and I believe that this could easily explain our power outages in most meetings. The Bible says that we derive our understanding of God's plan through His Word. That Word serves to establish faith in our lives. The revelation of His will orients us and gives us an understanding that God's power is made manifest to accomplish His will. The Bible says that faith comes from hearing and understanding and receiving the Word of God. But faith without corresponding action is dead. I want to submit to you that when we hear the Word of God preached over and over and do not mix it with action, I believe that it produces a negative expectation resulting in unbelief in our hearts instead of Faith. Most of the church today receives a wealth of teaching through multiple weekly church services, messages on CD, Christian books, conferences and conventions, etc. If we receive these revelations by faith and mix them with corresponding action, our faith-filled action will result in making much power available. If these revelations are not mixed with the action of faith, I believe that it produces unbelief in our hearts and that unbelief is short-circuiting the power of God in our lives.

Now all of this assumes that all of our dreams and desires and hopes and prayers along with our faith-filled actions are aligned with His divine purpose. If it is not, let me suggest another solution as to why there is such a want of power in our lives and ministries. Could it be that all of our hoping, believing, dreaming, desiring, asking and praying have not been aligned with His purpose and thus do not warrant the blessing of His power? If we look at the scripture in verse twenty we see this little phrase appearing in the Amplified version of that passage, "To carry out His purpose." I think that many times we take this scripture out of context and apply it to any and every idea that ever comes to the mind of man. I want to submit to you that we cannot ignore the fact that His power is made manifest in accordance with His purpose. We have assumed that His power was made available for the application as we saw fit for fulfillment of our agenda. But He only promises to fulfill those plans that originated either in His Word or by His Spirit. I believe that when we begin to align ourselves more closely with His plans we will find that that is where the place of power is. I believe that we need to revisit times of personal consecration, committing our lives to God and the action of His Word, learning to be led by His Spirit, allowing Him to direct our lives and our ministries. I believe that then, and only then, will we see the power of God being made manifest in the measure that He desires.