

Spiritual Power

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 January 2014

[0:00] Lately I was saddened to hear about someone that formerly had what seemed to be a strong faith.

! And it seems like they've fallen by the wayside.! They've not got that zeal that they've once had. There's something gone missing. Something lacking. Something happened to this person. And I was really grieved to discover how this man's testimony failed. How his faith was weakened. And it makes me wonder how many others are in that same circumstance today. To watch yourself. Watch yourself and consider yourself. Consider your spiritual life tonight. Perhaps there was a time you were more further than you are now. And perhaps now you can look back and think, wow, I've slipped. Something slipped.

[1:46] How sad to see Christians weakening and lacking spiritual maturity. There's a little bit of a rockage there it seems with some. Some untapped power that they're missing.

Missing out on God's grace. On God's power. God wants you to be empowered as his people. As his children. As the saints of the living God. As people who love him. He wants you to know his power. To be empowered. For his glory. And to grow in grace.

God's will for you. For me. And this message is born from my prayer for you. That you too would break free from that which shackles you. From that which holds you back.

In running that gospel race. From that which would make you such as one that is hindered. In that lack of power. How sad to see Christians. It seems in bondage. And held back.

Held back. Held back in that race. You know the great man of God. Paul himself. Suffered these times of doubt. Of discouragement. We see in 2 Corinthians 12 verse 9.

[2:55] He writes. He said unto me. My grace is sufficient for thee. For my strength is made perfect in weakness. Thank God for that. Even Paul. He knew this time. Of seeming weakness. Of this storm.

Thank God for that. Even Paul, he knew this time of seeming weakness, of this thorn in the flesh. He's prayed and prayed. He's feeling somewhat despondent. And God says, my strength is made perfect in your weakness.

I look back at that man. It seemed like he began so well in his Christian life. Yet, it appears that he's finishing oh so badly. Oh so badly.

Some people are like that. They seem to start with this fire and enthusiasm and zeal and love for the Lord, serving the Lord it would seem. Yet, years go by and some fall into sin. Or they lose their zeal. Or they get sidetracked by something, whether it be the love of money, the love of the world, something else.

Friends, the Christian race is a marathon. The Christian life is like a long distance marathon event. And by the time we reach glory, will we have that strong testimony in the closing, finishing stages of our race?

[4:47] Will we finish well? Or will we finish not so well? In Galatians 5 verse 7, Paul tells the Galatians, You did run well. Who did hinder you?

That you should not obey the truth. It's like there was something hindering them. There was something dragging out their heels and holding them back from being a good finisher.

And friends, there's a problem with stickability with Christians. I guess it's endemic in the Aussie culture sometimes. We lack stickability. We lack the follow through.

We don't have that get up and go and keep on going that we ought to have in running the gospel race. And I urge you here tonight to know that stickability, that faithfulness in the race, that persistence.

I want to encourage you, brother, sister, to finish well, to run the race with patience, perseverance, looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of the race, who is there at the finishing line, as it

were, urging us on.

[5:55] How can we know such a race? How can we run a race with power? How can we know that empowerment that God wants for us as his people, that source of spiritual power?

Where is it? How can I have that power? How can I know that power? Friends, tonight I want to give you some little pointers for power. ways to have empowerment in your Christian life.

How can I be a more powerful Christian? How can I live a more powerful Christian life? There are many avenues for empowerment that we can have.

And I just want to cover a number of those. Really a bit of a topical, touching numbers of scriptures here tonight. How can I be an empowered Christian? You know, you can settle for being a mediocre Christian.

But how can I be an empowered Christian? How can I run this race with persistence, with perseverance, with patience, with power? How can I be empowered in my Christian life?

[7:05] One avenue for power is your testing. Your testing is powerful. Friends, it's evident in the lives of men and women of faith.

Those who have been through the greatest trials can have the greatest faith. It's not always so, but often it is the case. Where a Christian who's going through the mill can hang on to God ever tighter and run that race ever stronger.

If when we're humbled we'll cry out to God, He can better fill us and use us for His glory. In Psalm 46 verse 1 it says, God is our strength.

God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble. Isn't that wonderful? That's where He is, in your trouble.

Amen? When you're in trouble, God is. A very present help. Our refuge and strength. So let trouble make you ever more determined.

[8:13] Let it just make you ever more sharper and stronger and more determined than ever before. So that if you're in a country where you have to give your life for the gospel's sake, if it was a choice of deny Christ or live, you would rather stand for Christ and die.

Amen. That you would rather choose that. Be valiant for the truth. Your testing is powerful. It was for Job. Job was the most just man on all the earth.

You know, he would have failed the test in some quarters where you're measured by your wealth or your health. Job was the most just man and he lost everything. He said in Job 23 verse 10, But he knoweth the way that I take.

When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. Job knew that the testing was going to make him more powerful. That he would come forth as gold.

Tried in the fire, as it were. And Psalm 119 verse 71, The psalmist says, It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.

[9:28] You know, sometimes we've got to be on a sick bed to have time to open this book. Isn't that true? Sometimes it is. Sometimes we've got to be afflicted so we can cry out to God.

Your testing is powerful. It will help you be a more powerful Christian. Another avenue for power is humility. Your humility is powerful.

When we are humbled, God can get a hold of us. And better fill us and use us. James 4 verses 6 through 7. It says, But he giveth more grace.

Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Your humility is powerful. He gives more grace to the humble. He gives grace. He resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. Gideon was empowered when he was weakened.

[10:30] Gideon and his mighty army, God had to whittle it down to 300 against thousands. God had to weaken Gideon to empower him. And he does that through our lives too.

Sometimes we put through a weakening process, a humbling process, so that it will test where do our affections lie. On what do we depend?

When we lose everything, on what do we depend? Your humility is powerful. It will help you. In Isaiah 25 verse 4 it says, that God is a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a

refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat.

When you're feeling like you're weak, when you're feeling needy, when you're feeling like you need a refuge, that's powerful. That's powerful for you. It will make you more powerful in God.

We look through the record of Scripture. For example, Hebrews 11. At God's greats, the heroes of the faith, they had nothing going for them, pretty much humanly speaking.

[11:41] They were inadequate and very weak. So you're in good company if you're feeling like that today. If you're feeling weak, if you're feeling powerless, if you're feeling like you're not a strong Christian, then your humility is powerful tonight.

It's a good place to be humble. It's a good place to be. Because Isaiah 40 verse 29, it says, He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, He increaseth strength.

He gives power to the faint, and to those who have no might, He increaseth strength. In Habakkuk we read, that one that's been popularised by a chorus, although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive fail, and the field shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls.

Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds feet, and He will make me walk upon mine high places.

Even though everything looks drastic, and terrible, you know, in that time of agricultural dependency, that was their livelihood, lost, you know, the vine withering, the animals failing, the crop lost, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

[13:29] The Lord God is my strength. You can say that, brother, sister today, if you're feeling like you've come to the end of your rope, that God is your strength, and your humility is powerful.

Real power comes when we rely upon the Lord our God. Another area of power is your words are powerful.

Your words are powerful. In Proverbs 18, verse 21, it says, Death and life are in the power of the tongue. Death and life are in your mouth.

Your words are powerful. I think sometimes we can underestimate the power of our own words. And we're not talking about name it and claim it, but our words have powerful significance.

We can condemn or praise. We can encourage or deter. We can praise God or curse. Our words can do great damage or great good.

[14:31] In James 3, verse 10 through 11, it says, Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be. Doth the fountain send forth to the same place, at the same place, sweet, water, and bitter.

Christian, man, woman, hold your tongue if you want to swear. Do not curse. Out of the same mouth should not proceed blessing and cursing.

Ask God to save your lips, to save your mouth, to sanctify your mouth. Let your words be acceptable to God. What you post on Facebook, God's looking, as well as people.

And what a shameful testimony. When words that are not appropriate for a Christian are spoken or written. Let your words be acceptable unto God.

Psalms 19, verse 14, it says, Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

[15:36] How do you use your words? I know a brother of mine makes a point of saying, Speak evil of no man. That's what the word says.

Speak evil of no man. Now, I like to be friends with people like that because they won't be rubbing me behind my back, you know, stabbing me in the back or kicking me in the guts.

You know, speak evil of no man. Now, there's needful corrections, there's needful admonition, but we should not speak evil of another man. We can correct this doctrine if it needs correcting.

And we can do that politely. But let's use our mouth to bless and edify and encourage and uplift.

Use words wisely. There's only so many words you're going to speak before you're in the casket.

Use those words wisely, brother, sister. Let's use our mouth to speak life, to bring life and healing and truth to others. Your words are powerful.

[16:39] In Psalm 119, 172, it says, My tongue shall speak of thy word for all thy commandments are righteousness. Speak the word of God to one

another.

When you're encouraging one another, when you're fellowshiping, you might think, well, I'm not able to say a formal presentation or speech.

Well, you can obey Colossians 3, verse 16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

So it goes without saying that God's word should be on our lips and God's word is powerful when we speak it. As we speak it, have the word in your mouth.

[17:42] Use your lips to sing God's praise, to speak His word.

Scripture's like, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Philippians 4, verse 13. Put the word in your heart, in your mind, in your memory and speak it out of your lips. Confess it to yourself. Sing it to yourself.

When you're driving the car, when you're listening to the Bible on an audio track, let the word speak and speak it yourself.

Your words are powerful. Another avenue for power is your testimony is powerful. Your testimony. In Revelation 12, verse 11, we see the people there at the time of the end and they overcame Him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony and they loved not their lives unto the dead.

You have a testimony. If you're a saved man or woman here today, you're a saved man or woman with a testimony. You've got a story to tell. You've got a Saviour to speak of. You've got a story of His saving power and you can share that testimony.

[18:54] The word of your testimony has power. Your testimony is powerful.

In Acts 4.31, it says, they spoke the word of God with boldness. We ought to be bold with our testimony.

Ask God to give you opportunity to share a witness, a word. In this pleasure-loving age, many are easily led astray, like this man on you.

Easily led astray. They've blown their testimony. It's a drastic, shameful thing when someone blows their testimony.

I urge you here today to stand strong. Be strong and stay strong and get ever stronger. Don't slacken. There was a time in my early Christian life when I could reflect that I weakened.

but get back on track. Get back on track, brother, sister. Your testimony is powerful. Let it be a testimony that shines ever brighter and stronger.

[20:00] Let it be a witness that is sure and true, that you'll be pure, kept unspotted from the world. 1 Corinthians 6.19, we read, What?

Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price.

Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. Your body belongs to God as a Christian. Your feet, your hands, your mind, your life, your words, your job, it belongs to God.

You belong to God. You're His property purchased with a price. Live like it. Live like it. Live like you belong to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

Glorify God in your body, in your life. Let it count. Let 2014 count for you as a Christian. You want to make every day count for God that your testimony is powerful.

[21:02] As you glorify God with your life, with your lips, with your witness, with your walk, with that closeness to God, that greater power with Him, you'll speak His word and you'll have a testimony that you won't be ashamed of.

Are you missing the reality of God in your life? Friends, maybe you're not even sure you've got a testimony here today. Maybe there was a time you asked God to save you but you're not sure that you're saved.

You can be sure tonight that you're saved. By His grace, you can be sure and certain of that. And if you've failed and slipped and you're ashamed, you can repent, you can renew, you can refresh your testimony, you can recommit your life in faith to Him.

Are you missing the reality of God in your life? Your testimony is powerful. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you.

Restore that relationship with Him. Refresh it again. Renew it again. He will help you. Another avenue for power is your prayer is powerful.

[22:15] The untapped power of prayer. You know, sometimes we go through life and we scarcely think to pray. We seek counsel or advice or worldly thinking predominates our decision making but people of God here today, you've got the privilege of prayer.

Your prayer is something that is powerful and you can tap into the power of prayer any day, any hour, any moment, moment by moment. You don't have to wait to come into a so-called holy place to pray.

Paul says, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Have you stopped to ask Him to help you? Have you stopped to ask Him to strengthen you?

We live in a prayerless age. It's so busy, busy, busy, isn't it? With all these little gadgets that, you know, take our time and energy and distract us and there's always something to take our time, our attention away from God.

We live in a prayerless age. What a shame to neglect the power of prayer. It's at your fingertips, it's at your disposal. God is as close as a prayer away tonight.

[23:25] Prayer is powerful. In Acts 4.31 it says, When they prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they spake the Word of God with boldness.

Wouldn't it be great if we had a prayer meeting that started this place to just crack up and fall apart? It was just such a powerful prayer meeting. Wouldn't that be great? Tomorrow night, seven o'clock. God is faithful. Don't neglect the power of prayer. Prayer is powerful. Your prayer is powerful. Don't neglect to pray. Let us come boldly before the throne of grace.

Prayer can demolish strongholds. Prayer can lay hold of God. We see that Jacob wrestled with God. There was a wrestling with God. A wrestling match in a time where Jacob met with God and wrestled with God in prayer.

Sometimes we need to wrestle with God in prayer. Of course we know ultimately and absolutely His will gets done but we can, I believe we can have an influence when we pray. He's asked us to pray so it must do something when we pray.

[24:35] Amen. He wants us to pray. Prayer reaches the ears of God. So long as sin is not blocking your prayer is powerful.

You know Isaiah 40, 31 it says But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary and they shall walk and not faint.

Your prayer is powerful. Another avenue for prayer is your praise is powerful. How sad it is to see apparently joyless Christians.

Joyless Christians scarcely a smile on their faces and that's not to mean we put on a plastic smile and pretend everything's cool and dandy when it's not.

But it's like their joy's leaked out somewhere. It's just leaked out and they've left it behind somewhere. Friends, we should have praise that is powerful.

[25:39] And that might be praise in the prison like it was for Paul and Silas. It's not about the circumstances. It wasn't about how good they were feeling with their backs lashed and torn with the brutal beating they just had.

Your praise is powerful. And you've got something to tell the world about as a Christian. So stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.

What did God do with praise? Praise is right through the book. You've got a whole psalm book. A song book of praise. Your praise is powerful.

Take the psalms and praise them. Praise Him. 2 Chronicles 20 verse 21 it says that Jehoshaphat appointed singers unto the Lord.

That they should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army and to say praise the Lord for His mercy endureth forever.

[26:42] You know that was their secret weapon. That was the secret weapon of the army of God in 2 Chronicles 20 verse 21. It was praise. Praise was the secret weapon.

Praise is your secret weapon. Brother, sister, praise is powerful. Your praise is powerful. The king appointed the singers to walk ahead to sing to the Lord and it was disaster for the enemy. And friends, it's true for you. As God's people today, your praise is powerful. Let God be magnified by your life and your lips. Like someone has said, it's impossible to worship and worry at the same time.

That's good, isn't it? If you ever feeling worried, try worship. Amen? Are you with me? Try worship. You can't worry and worship at the same time.

You can sing Exodus 15 too. The Lord is my strength and song and he has become my salvation. He is my God. And it goes on, I will exalt him.

[27:45] It was after the Egyptians were slaughtered and baptised in the river. The Lord is my strength and song. That's true for you.

Sister, brother, the Lord is my strength and song. Doesn't matter what's going on around about. God is my song. In Psalm 118 verse 14 it says, The Lord is my strength and song and has become my salvation.

There's power in your song. There's power in your praise. I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Psalm 34 verse 1. We're nearly there. There's lots of these. I'm only scratching the surface. But your fear of God is powerful. Your fear of God, the fear of God is power to you.

If you fear him, if you revere him, if you regard him and honour him, there's a standard in your life of holiness and it affects your whole being, your whole sense of life, your strength goes beyond your own power.

[28:47] When you fear God, you'll depart from evil. In the early church, there was the fear of God there. People slain by the Spirit in Acts 5 verse 11.

Slain by the Spirit, Ananias and Sapphira, they dropped dead because of their sinful heart. exposed. There was the fear of God.

And then it says in Acts 5 verse 11, great fear came upon all the church. And it says people were so scared that non-dead joined them. Church was something scary.

Well, they're the people that if you act up, you might drop dead when God's judgment is vented. Non-dead joined them.

The fear of God was there, but the early church had power. Power! There was power there!

Brother, sister, there was power there! There was great fear, but there was great power there!

There was great fear, but there was great grace there!

[29:49] Thank God for that! We need to fear God. There's power there!

When we really realise who this holy God is that we claim to worship. Church wasn't some bless me club.

There was power there! Because it was real! The fear of God! And your fellowship is powerful! Your fellowship is powerful! Because God has commanded a blessing!

It says He's commanded a blessing! In Psalm 133 verse 1 Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

When God's brothers and sisters get together in united worship and fellowship there's something good there! There's something pleasant! There's something powerful there! There's a strengthening of one another!

Because I might be here really for you to strengthen me! and vice versa! Or your neighbour! Or vice versa! You might be here not so much to be blessed but to be a blessing!

[30:59] There could be someone in this room here today that you need to speak to! To exalt them! To encourage them! To uplift them! Your fellowship is powerful!

There's people here that are needy! and there's people here who can encourage the needy! It's mutual isn't it? That mutual strengthening of one another! He's designed us that way to love one another and to fellowship!

And it says in 1 Thessalonians 5 verse 11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together and edify one another even as also you do!

Comfort! Encourage! Encourage one another! Your faith is powerful! God can do a spiritual awakening in your life! Have faith in God!

That was one of the sermons of the Lord Jesus! Have faith in God! Four words! It's a four point sermon! Have faith in God! Faith!

[31:58] Your faith is powerful! And His presence is with you by faith! Psalm 118 verse 6 It says The Lord is on my side! I will not fear!

What can man do? unto me! God's presence is with you! Do you believe? Do you believe? Do you have faith tonight? Is it faith?

It might think my faith is about the size of a grain of mustard! Wow! You can move some mountains! Amen! Your faith is powerful tonight! Even though it seems insignificant!

Joshua 1 verse 9 it says Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage! Be not afraid! Neither be thou dismayed! For the Lord by God is with thee whithersoever thou goest!

God says be strong! Be of good courage! I'm with you wherever! Psalm 27 1 David said The Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear?

[32:58] The Lord is my strength of my life of whom shall I be afraid? Take these scriptures and apply them. You can have the same faith that the men and women of God had in these pages and through church history.

Your faith is powerful. It's as limited as really we make it, isn't it? I think really what's limiting our faith.

It's you and me, isn't it? I believe. The only reason your faith is not more powerful is because there's a lack there in us.

There's a lack in us. The people of God through the pages of scripture were ordinary men and women. They weren't anything particularly outstanding in their generations.

They were average everyday people just like the people right here. You and me right here and now. So let's just close now with some quick application. There's many more ways we can talk about how I can be an empowered Christian.

[34:08] There's exceeding great and precious promises right here. It's jam packed for you. The answers are here on how to be empowered. He says to you, fear thou not for I am with thee.

Be not dismayed for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee. Yea, I will help thee. I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

These are scriptures that can speak to you. Last but not least, for power, and really most of all, we need to rely on the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord Jesus says I'm not leaving you alone without comfort. I'm not leaving you like an orphan. I will come to you. I will send my comforter. The power of the Holy Spirit.

And without this power, his power, we cannot be saved, let alone sanctified. We need his power to transform our life and turn it around.

[35:15] No matter where you've been in the past, he can turn your life around right here and now for time and eternity. You don't have to put on fancy terminology or fancy clothes or change your life and become a good person.

No, it's not of that. It's about a decision to trust him. And he will make the changes happen in your life. He will make that transformation happen.

That same power is available now. Friends, just think about it. If you were to think about this question of how can I be a more empowered Christian? How can I not be like that man who folded and failed and made a miserable finish of it?

It would appear unless God helping him by his grace he gets back on his feet again. We can make a miserable finish of our Christian life or we can finish! power supply it's the same as it ever has been the power supply is just as powerful here today and now as it ever has been the problem is not with the power supply the problem is with the power connection the problem is with the connection to the power supply we need to reconnect you know this morning we had trouble with the microphone there was a faulty connection and it didn't faulty connection it can happen it can happen to all of us Paul says I pray that he would grant you to be strengthened with might by his

spirit in the inner man there's an inner man inside you and Paul prays that according to the riches of his glory God would strengthen you with might by his spirit in the inner man we would be truly spirit led power from on high that power that the men and women of God had through the scriptures we know in the old the power came upon them the spirit came upon people in the new covenant the spirit comes within us he indwells us he empowers us that power from on high power to witness power to live a dynamic Christian life and this same power this same power this same power that power the power of Pentecost is that same power tonight that same power that he can fill us with God's Holy Spirit power delivering power witnessing power God's power his spirit is a chain breaker for you what does hinder you look like you're running so well what's gone wrong what's hindering you is the power disconnected or a bit hit and miss the very power of

[38:20] God can transform us and shake us and take a hold of us and control our lives for his glory and so then God helping us it will be true for you for me that you will run this marathon and you'll run well you'll run with patience you'll run with perseverance you'll run with his power and he'll say well done well done you've finished well you've finished well you know Paul said I've finished my course that crowns ahead for me he knew it was just very close for him he could see the marathon event was about to end finish strong finish strong brother finish strong sister let today be a turning point when you're going to decide to follow Jesus decide no turning back no turning back no faltering slip sliding away no hindrances no slipping and sliding and mucking up but you'll run the race with patience and you'll run and you'll finish well

I pray that will be true for you that you'll know those sources of power so that it will be said for you as Jesus says in Revelation 3 verse 11 behold I come quickly hold that fast which thou! shame it would be on coronation day that there's a crown that you'll miss out on that you could have had quickly to recount to empower your life your testing is powerful don't shy away from trial it'll make you stronger your humility if you resist God it won't work but if you humble yourself he will strengthen he'll lift you up your words are powerful your testimony is powerful your prayer your praise your fear of God is powerful your fellowship is powerful your faith is powerful and most of all the indwelling power of his Holy Spirit we don't depend on ourselves we don't try to conjure it up and make it happen by our own fleshly striving and energy it's his indwelling power that we need it's his inner man being strengthening the inner strengthening of the inner man by God's Spirit friends I urge you tonight trust him trust him now make today a turning point I urge you prayerfully if I can beseech you as Christ would beseech you I think he would say that to you run well run well let us pray let us pray!
a! a! a! a! a! Thank you.