

Power

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[0:00] Matthew 21, verse 23, just the one verse there. And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things?

And who gave thee this authority? People wanted to know, where was his authority from? Where was his power coming from? Where was his source of authority?

That he had. Because we know, elsewhere we read how, it says that he taught the people with authority. He wasn't teaching like the scribes and Pharisees of the day, that were putting all kinds of clauses, and man surmising into what was being said.

But he taught with authority. There was an authority to the word that our Saviour spoke. And these chief priests and elders questioned that. They questioned where his authority, his power was coming from.

And friends today, we can take heart that the word of our Saviour has power. The word of our Saviour has authority. And it's got a power behind it that goes beyond human power.

[1:13] And in the word of God, it says that the Lord Jesus is the very power of God. We'll come to that. But firstly, Colossians chapter 1. Do you want to flick there? Just another verse.

These verses I'm referring to tonight, speak about the power of God. Speaks about the power, the authority of our Lord. And these are things that we can take to heart and apply to our lives, I trust, by God's help.

And Colossians 1, verses 12 through to 19. It says there, Colossians 1, verse 12, Paul writes, giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.

For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.

All things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the preeminence.

[2:45] For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell. Friends, it's saying there that the Lord Jesus is the image of the invisible God.

He is stamped with the image of the invisible God. He is the expressed image of God. It says in the Word that in Him dwell all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

That's Colossians 2, verse 9. And friends, He is the one, by Him were all things created. By Him all things consist.

And that in all things He might have the preeminence. Think of the power of His name, the power of our Saviour, the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And He is the very power of God. We read that in 1 Corinthians 1, verse 24. If you want to flick there.

[3:44] They questioned Him. They said, Where is your authority? Where is your authority coming from? Now, He wasn't from the schools of the scribes and Pharisees. He didn't have the qualifications that perhaps the scribes and Pharisees and the different schools of the day would have given to Him.

He wasn't backed by some religious establishment. But yet, He had an authority. And the people wanted to know, Where do you get your power from? Where is your authority from? And it's wonderful to think that for you and I as God's people, as God's children, it says in Philippians 2.13, For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Christ in you, we're told. Christ in you, the hope of glory.

The one who is, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the one who comes and lives within our hearts and within our lives. We are in Christ and He is in us.

And 1 Corinthians 1 verse 24, it defines the power of God. I know many Christians are searching for that. They're longing for that. How do I have the power of God in my life?

[5:05] How do I experience, how do I know the power of God in my life? Well, it's about knowing Him. It's about finding Christ as your Lord and Master. Because it defines what the power of God is there.

In 1 Corinthians 1 verse 24, it says, unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

So if you're looking for power, if you're looking for wisdom, if you're looking for the power of God, if you're looking for the wisdom of God, it's about knowing Him. As Paul said, to know Him, to know Him and the power of His resurrection.

To know Him. That was His longing. That was His desire. The power was in the person of the Saviour. We read in Isaiah 9 verse 6, that familiar one, for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Think of that word, Mighty. Mighty, the Mighty God. In the Word it says, He's mighty to save. He's the mighty conqueror. He is the mighty, the Almighty. And He is the Mighty God.

[6:20] We're talking about power tonight. We want to experience His power. We want to know His power. It's about knowing His person. It's about finding the Saviour. It's about experiencing salvation.

Christ in you. The hope of glory. That is the power to overcome. The power to live the Christian life. Not of our own.

I know we can try on our own strength and fail miserably. It's not of ourselves, but it is of Him. I know, as was referred to this morning, that in our weakness, He is made strong.

In our weakness, in His strength, His resident, and president. He is our power base, our Saviour, our Master. And the foundation on which we build our lives is His Word, His truth.

His church is built on Christ as the very foundation stone for our lives. And friends, think about it.

His parting words to planet Earth, to His people, was, in that context of Matthew 28, verse 18, He says, Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

[7:35] All power. You know, we could think, I don't know what your power company is at home, whether you've got AGL or some other power company, but really, all power.

Even, you know, the power of the wealth, rotating of the universe, circulating of all the micro and macro level power in the world today.

You know, even, I've heard it said that even if you were to harness the power in some simple plant, it's got a massive potential, enormous power is resident in the most simple organisms that you could power houses with.

The power that is actually evident in small plants and small organisms. It's amazing, and yet, think that all that power is His power, isn't it?

All power. The whole power of all the universe is in Christ. He has all that power, and then He says to us, what? Go. I'm sending you. You know, that's a wonderful joy to know that all His power is behind His commission to you and to me.

[8:52] All power is in His power, is in His control. And think of the opposite of that, that if you don't have Christ, if you don't have Christ's life in you, if you're not saved tonight, it says, John 15, 5, the Lord Jesus says, I am the vine, ye are the branches, he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing.

For without me you can do nothing. You know, really and truly, our ability, our capacity is zero, isn't it? Of our own strength, even, even our best of intentions or, you know, our own, you know, our own faculties are really entirely at His own disposal, aren't they?

And really and truly, we're totally in the palm of His hand or under His wrath. And friends, tonight, without Christ you can do nothing.

Without Christ you can do nothing. We're totally powerless, we're totally without power, without Him. And all the good that we can do, he says, without me you can do nothing.

And we know that, as we know, when we try to do something good or give up something bad, he says, without me you can do nothing. We've got to rely on Him. We've got to rest on Him. We've got to trust in the Lord.

[10:20] Trust in Him and His capacity and His power and He will perform that which is good. In Psalm 150 it says, praise Him for His mighty acts.

Think of His mighty acts, just His very name, His very nature. He is mighty, He is almighty, He is the mighty God and He has all power and He has mighty acts.

He's mighty to save. He's mighty. Just look through your concordance to these words that I've picked out really just at random. Really you could say, mighty, almighty, power, strength.

All of these words are tremendous words and they're all coming from Him, from our Lord. He says, praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

You know, the word says, great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. He's great, He's wonderful, He's almighty, He's mighty today. And think of it too, even in our praises tonight.

[11:21] The word says in Psalm 22, 3, but thou art holy, O thou, that inhabitest the praises of Israel. It says He inhabits the praises of Israel.

He resides in our praises. He's resident there. He's evident there. He lives in our praises. When you praise Him, He lives in that praise.

There's a sense where He's present as we praise Him, as we gather in fellowship and worship and He resides there. Think of the power in the blood that we sing of.

The power in His name. That converting power. That power to save. And what does it do? In real life, it does save. We can think of examples of folk that we've known.

Maybe even your life is a testimony to the power of God. The transforming power of what you used to be. I know that there's an elderly man that I have fellowship with and he breaks down and in tears as he remembers that day.

[12:25] It must have been decades ago that he was saved. And he just rejoices in that salvation. And he remembers what he was. He remembers how God transformed his life.

It was the power of conversion, the power of Christ, the Saviour, that entered into that life. You can think of a young boy. Long ago, he lived in a town in Prussia.

His name was George Miller. And he grew up to break his mother's heart. Even when she was dying, he was there playing cards and gambling. He used to make a habit of roaming the streets, getting drunk, blog, blog, blog, you know, roaming the streets, walking around, staggering like a drunkard.

And eventually, he found his way to prison. He was a vagabond. He was a wreck. He was thrown on the garbage heap of his day. A thief, a vagabond. Years passed by in a city in western England. It was time for his funeral. The funeral procession went through this town in England where he'd moved to. And as it passed by, all the flags were at half-mast. All the stores were closed.

[13:32] Thousands lined the streets. Many people were in tears because George Muller, was the name that he changed to, was put to rest. This thief of Halberstadt had been converted.

He'd been converted. The power of God had transformed his life. He'd come into contact with the Christ of Galilee. He surrendered his life to him and became the most outstanding example of faith in God of that time.

He became a father to thousands of homeless children. He raised over \$10 million to care for them without telling a single man without asking of anyone but of God.

George Muller, a man of prayer, a man of God, converted. There was a power of conversion was evident in that man's life. This drunkard, this vagabond, this thief, this criminal, this wreck of a man,

Christ saved his soul and there was a conversion.

The power of God converted his soul. And that's the wonder of Calvary. That's the wonder of the power of Christ, our Saviour. Think of the power of the Gospel.

[14:47] Romans 1.16 it tells us of the power of the Word. The Word itself has got wonderful power. Wonderful power. We know it tells us there in Psalm 19 of the power that it can convert the soul.

Psalm 19 amongst other things. Have a flick there later to Psalm 19 where we're told of many of the features of the Word of God. But amongst others it says the law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul.

This book has power. It's power. The Word of God says that it is quick and powerful. Powerful. Powerful. Full of power.

And sharper than any two-edged sword. That's in Hebrews. Brothers and sisters, the Word of God is power. And Romans 1.16 Paul writes, he says, this is the power of God unto salvation.

The gospel of Christ. I'm not ashamed of it, he says, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believer, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

[15:57] And friends, tonight, we have the wonderful privilege today to have the Bible in our hand. I was just talking to a brother earlier about Old Testament saints. They only had half of it. We've got the whole package, amen.

We've got Genesis to Revelation. You know, the Old Testament saints only had part of the book. You've got the whole book in your hand and in your very English language. You know, thank God for that.

There's times in the dark ages when they didn't have it in the language of the day and the language of the country. And we thank the Lord. We've got God's revealed truth to us. And friends, we can build our lives on this book, on the truth of it, the foundation of it, and we don't add to it or subtract from it.

We stand strongly on it, full square upon it. And friends, the fact is today, and I've been saddened to meet some folk of lame, that they've got an extra addition to the Bible.

And that's the fact, that's what's happening in, whether in the Jehovah's Witness circles, there's an organisation you've got to go to, to be able to understand the book. In the Mormon religion, there's a Latter-day prophet, and a prophet who supposedly had another New Testament, another testament of Jesus Christ, as if God's word isn't enough.

[17:20] And that's what they'll be talking about Saturday, the sufficiency of scripture. They're adding to the book. There's a danger to extra-biblical revelations, whether it's Ellen White in the Seventh-day Adventists, whether it's even some of the charismatic persuasion, trying to add to the Bible.

Friends, we've got to be very guarded and careful of those who call themselves apostles and prophets of any kind. Certainly, the word of God needs to be full square in our mind and heart and not deviated from, not shifted from.

Our foundation cannot shift. There's Latter-day revelations that abound today. We hear of cults and various Latter-day prophets. You've got to be very careful because the word says, these will be one of the characteristics of the end days.

Especially when these things contradict the word of God, we can be assured that it's not the spirit of God at work. So, every believer, every man, every church has to be accountable to our Lord in terms of faithfulness in adherence to the word.

As a local church body, as a local church body, some have questioned, they said, where is your authority? You know, and that's a valid question because there's cults about today, there's sects, there's particular groups that are stand-alone, not accountable to other authority, and we don't want to make the mistake of following those cults.

[18:45] It's a valid question, where is your authority? We don't have a denominational structure above us. We don't have bishops and archbishops and popes above us. We don't have a denominational structure with national headquarters and certain levels of hierarchy and so on.

We are a local church, a local autonomous church, and friends, I believe that's the Bible pattern, that the church is the local base, it's the local outpost on planet earth, if you like, and we as a church relate to Christ as the head of the church.

Every local church has that authority where Christ is the head, Christ is the power, and of course through the ministry, I'm accountable to you as God's people, and we have that legal framework where you can, as members, you can remove me, and so you should, if I'm not living up to the scriptures or preaching the truth.

There is that need for accountability and respect for the word of God, so that the pastor can be dismissed if he is getting out of line with the word of God.

So there's need for that, that accountability, but essentially that accountability is to the word, it's to the word, and as God's people together we search the scriptures to see if these things are so.

[20:10] And friends, it says in the word, 1 Thessalonians 2.13, that for this cause also we thank God without ceasing, because when you receive the word of God which he heard of us, you receive it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

That word effectually worketh, it's got the sense of energy, it's the Greek word from which we get the word energy, it effectually worketh, the word of God should effectually work in your life, it should be effectually working in your life, it should be energising your life, it should be activating your life, powering you, transforming you, motivating you, reviving you.

And the word of God we know it's referred to as being a seed. Think of the power that is in a seed. We know even huge oak trees and massive tall trees grow from just a tiny, eensy, weensy little seed when it's planted in the right conditions, that tiny seed can grow into a massive tree.

There's wonderful power in the seed. A seed the size of a freckle can become a massive, huge tree. And that seed, even though it's planted deep in the ground, it can move mountains.

Because as that seed grows, it can push through all of those inches of dirt at times to come to the light and to flourish. And friends, this is a seed. The word of God, the Lord Jesus, illustrates the word that's being preached as being seed sown.

[21:43] And this word, it's life to us. It germinates, it brings life, and it brings power. And we shouldn't underestimate the power of a seed.

Don't underestimate the power of the word of God. It should effectually work in you that believe. So we see Christ is the power of God. His word is powerful.

It's quick, it's alive, power of God. It's powerful. And the Spirit of God is the power. Also referred to God's power. Of course, we know the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, He is a person.

We don't refer to Him, the Holy Spirit, as an it, as just some impersonal power or force of God. But He is a person. One of the three persons of the Godhead.

And Acts 1 verse 8 tells us that the Lord promised, but you shall receive power. After that, the Holy Ghost has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me. He says you shall be witnesses when you have the power.

[22:47] Friends, have you got that potential tapped into that potential power? We know that power, unless it's plugged in, unless you wire up these batteries to a circuit, then it can't do you any good.

The power that is resident in this battery will not do you any good. You've got to connect. You've got to connect. And likewise, too, without being flippant or comparing the Holy Spirit to mere power, there is a sense where we need to connect.

We need to reach out and connect with God and make contact with God and reach out. Tap in to that potential of His power.

And He says, Luke 24, Behold, I send you the promise of my Father, upon you, but tarry you in the city of Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high.

We need that power from on high. We need that power, the Holy Spirit power, to live the life that we're called to live. And sometimes we can quench the Holy Spirit.

[23:52] We can grieve the Holy Spirit. And we've got fire extinguishers in this building. We don't want to extinguish the fire, do we? We don't want to extinguish the fire of God's Spirit.

We want to fan it into flame and bring it blazing and fire it up. And yet we can quench the Holy Spirit. It's been said that when divers go diving, there's a basic principle of diving, don't stand on your own air hose.

You know, some divers, they stand on their air hose and they wonder why they're not getting the oxygen through their air hose. And they suffocate. And you know, sometimes we as Christians, we can quench the Holy Spirit.

We can quench the Holy Spirit. And not let God have all of us. And not seek His face. Friends, for us to be able to live the victorious Christian life, we want His empowering, we want His equipping, His enduingment.

And think of the power that the early church had. Don't we want that power? The power that the early church had. What were they given power to be, to do? To be His witnesses.

[25:00] To be His witnesses. And as a Christian, you are empowered to be His witness. That is the reason He gives us His Holy Spirit to be His witnesses.

And at salvation we receive the Holy Spirit. Because if you have not the Holy Spirit, you're not of His. So obviously we have His Spirit. There is a sense, I believe, where we can be refreshed and revived and renewed in our spiritual life.

And we need to seek His face for that. To receive those fillings afresh with the Spirit. That empowering, that enduingment. Power to overcome. Power to grow.

Power to witness. Power to live a life that's pleasing to Him. And His strength, thank God, is made perfect in weakness. And lastly, just another thought about power.

We've looked at the power of God. He is Christ. The power of God. It's Christ in you that helps you live the Christian life. We've seen His message to you. This is, the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.

[26:05] We've seen the power of the Holy Spirit. He's promised us. He's given to us for a reason. He's helped us to live the life. He will not leave us comfortless. He will come to us.

And that's where it says that in John. He'll not leave us as orphans. He'll come to us. He'll leave us. He'll be. He'll not leave us alone. He'll have that presence with us in the person of His Spirit.

And lastly, think of prayer. Prayer. Prayer is powerful. It's been said that prayer moves the hand of God. And I know that we all can pray more.

We all can pray more. Think of. The power that you tap into, as it were. Think of that power. That power. For. Plug in with some prayer.

Amen. Plug in with some prayer. You know, connect with Him in prayer. He says, if you draw near to me, I will draw near to you. And James 5.16 it says, confess your faults one to another and pray one for another.

[27:05] Pray one for another. Pray for me. Let me pray for you. Tell me what you'd like me to pray about. For you. And I can tell you what you can pray about for me. Pray one for another.

That you may be healed. And it goes on. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Much can happen. Much power. Much potential. Much can be availed. Much can be realised through prayer. And what kind of prayer? The effectual fervent prayer. Again, it's that word *energeo* in the Greek underlying the English words here, effectual fervent.

There's an energy to prayer. Prayer should be energised. It should be energetic. A famous preacher of old said, Ian Bounds, what the church needs now is not more machinery or better, not new organisations or more novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use.

Men of prayer. Men mighty in prayer. Men of prayer. Men mighty in prayer. That's what God wants today. He wants now in His church.

[28:23] Not more machinery, not programs, not busyness, but prayerfulness. Prayerfulness. I know that's an area that I need to do more in.

Much more in. Friends, we could all take stock. How am I in my prayer life? Is that power lacking? Is that power low?

Do I need to get some energising in that prayer again? Some energising in that Christian walk, in that Holy Spirit filled life, in that Word filled life, in that Christ filled life.

Friends, today, the power of God. It's evident. It's present. It should be. It should be in your life and mine. But we need to what? Depend on His power.

Depend on His power, on His resources, not on our own. It's when we come to the end of our own strength, that's where we need to be. That's where God used the men and women of God through the pages of Scripture, through the record of history, through the revivals and reformation, the people that were coming to that end of their own strength and turning to His strength.

[29:36] People who prayed. People who the world thought nothing of. They were, and I know it was referred to this morning, of persecution. And we read in Hebrews this morning too.

By faith. Let me just refer, just in closing, Hebrews 11. By faith. You'd think towards the end of Hebrews 11, I could add the words by faith, which is the context of Hebrews 11.

For example, Hebrews 11, verse 37, or verse 36. Hebrews 11, verse 36, you could say, by faith. They had cruel mockings.

Cruel mockings. By faith. Bonds. Chains. By faith. Imprisonment. By faith.

Scourgings. Verse 37. By faith. Stonings. By faith. Sawn asunder. They were cut in half. By faith. Tempted.

[30:39] By faith. Slain with the sword. By faith. Wandering around in sheepskins and goatskins. By faith. Being destitute. That means without any money. They didn't know the prosperity gospel back then.

In Hebrews 11. They were destitute. They didn't have any. They didn't have a brass razzu. They were destitute. By faith. They were destitute. By faith. They were afflicted. By faith. They were tormented.

Of whom the world was not worthy. These are the men and women of God. Take a look at Hebrews 11. Think of these men and women of God. But what did they have? They had the power. They had the power.

They were a church with power. They were the people of God with power. Of their day. That's what we need to be brothers and sisters. To get back to where they were at. They were scorned and mocked.

Mistreated. The lowest of the low. Yet they obtained a good report. They obtained a good report through faith. What about you tonight? Think about how can I be a more powerful Christian?

[31:44] Let us pray. Dear Lord, we rejoice in your word that it does have the power to convert the soul. Lord, we know that we can trust you and find that everlasting life.

The life that is in you that transforms us from the inside out. Lord, that power of conversion, we know it's so real, it's so true. It's such a blessed joy to know that.

It's possible even today in the 21st century, Lord, that we can still know the transforming power of your Holy Spirit. Lord, we pray for everyone gathered here tonight, every family, every individual Christian, Lord, help us, Lord, we need to get to that point where we cry out in desperation, where we cry out, Lord, in the emptiness of our souls, in the emptiness, in the lackness, in the weakness, in the slackness, in the shallowness at times.

I know, speaking of myself, Lord, of my lack, of my need, of that power, of your power, Lord, that we might know what it is to have that wonderful power to live the Christian life with power and victory. Help us, Lord, each one, that we might tap in and touch you, Lord, touch heaven with our lives and live it out in our daily walk, we pray.

[33:10] For your glory, we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.