



Ministry Toolkit: POWER

Sunday 17th November 2024

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Your weaknesses, your failings, your fears, your inadequacies, and your shortcomings are the most likely places where God will fulfil His calling on your life. All those ever used by God to serve their generation are a fulfilment of a statement made by God in Zechariah 4:6,

1

‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the Lord of hosts.

2

And here’s why in Psalm 127:1-2,

Unless the Lord builds the house,
They labor in vain who build it;
Unless the Lord guards the city,
The watchman stays awake in vain.
² *It is vain for you to rise up early,
To sit up late,
To eat the bread of sorrows;
For so He gives His beloved sleep.*

3

You will never accomplish God’s purposes by working longer hours, or by working more days, or by doing more overtime than anyone else, but by submitting yourself to the ways and the promises of God, because they are higher than your ways and His thinking is higher than your thinking.

4

No let us go to today’s passage in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5,

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. ² For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. ³ I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴ And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

5

This world needs churches that determine to know nothing among them EXCEPT Jesus Christ AND Him crucified. Because the crucified Jesus is the ONLY

hope of this world. For this to be so you must adopt the goal of John the Baptist who said in John 3:30,

6

He must increase, but I must decrease.

That Christian must be your daily prayer if you are to see Him move in this your generation. Now let us zoom into the words at the heart of today's text, in verse 3,

7

I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.

8

Tell me Christian, can you list your weaknesses? What are those things within you that the world would say disqualifies you from having any much influence. Is it a chronic illness, is it tiredness, is it laziness, is it your age (too young/old), is it your language, is it your experience, is it your qualifications, is it the family you were born into, is the family you are raising, is it the poor decisions you made growing up, is it the abuse that has left scars in your mind and body, is it your addictive psychology? Whatever your weaknesses, listen to Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10,

9

And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Why does Paul gladly admit to his weaknesses? Because then, the power of Christ rests upon Him – stays with Him. Let's think about what it means when he says 'when I am weak, then I am strong'.

10

A woodpecker was pecking away at her favourite tree. Hammering away so everyone could hear her talent across the whole woodland. Until all of a sudden there was a mighty flash and a bang and the tree she had been hammering away at was split in two right down the middle of its mighty trunk and burst into flames – it had been struck by lightning. As she flew away the woodpecker said to herself – I had now idea I had so much power in my beak. That silly woodpecker is just like a silly Christian who is amazed at the power they believe to be in their own strength.

11

Now with that thought, let's continue in verse 4,

And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power

12 The biggest obstacle I see that stops people from coming to Christ today, is not their unbelief, but the church's unbelief and the church's self-belief. Until you are convinced that your persuasive words, your understanding of how people think and hear, or your clever evangelism techniques will never save a single soul then your efforts will be futile.

13 No here's what changes everything. At the end of verse 4 Paul says 'but'! that word changes the direction of travel and it is about to demand of you that you radically rethink a lot of what you think about you and about the power of Christ. Paul's words and proclamations were as he said,

in demonstration of the Spirit and of power

Who's Spirit? God's Spirit! Who's power? God's power! A demonstration (not the protest type) is where someone with great understanding shows this through some means to help those who don't know become those who do know.

14 And here's why I believe God works through our weaknesses. When a weak little boy goes to fight a giant the only way the boy wins is if there is a demonstration of God's power – and there was!

The only way this generation will be reached for Christ is if you will stand up in all the weaknesses you left off your CV and in faith live and proclaim Jesus Christ and Him crucified. You say "Nonsense!". You are right, it makes no sense to the human mind. But this is exactly what Paul declared in 1 Corinthians 1:27-

15 29,

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹that no flesh should glory in His presence.

The end goal to ensure that ALL the glory goes to God and none of it goes to you and certainly none of it goes to this church. And here's why back in 1 Corinthians 2:5,

16 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

If you want the world, your family, your friends, your colleagues, to truly believe in His Son Jesus Christ through the power of His resurrection, then two things must happen,

1. Your strengths need to be crucified (Galatians 5:24, 'And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.')
2. Your weaknesses need to be glorified (2 Corinthians 12:9, 'Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.')

Without the same power that resurrected Christ resting on you, your efforts will come to nothing. Unless that same power that came upon the disciples at Pentecost comes upon you then all your efforts are wasted.

You will not become a victorious Christian, much less, an effective witness.

But with that power upon you and God's Spirit within you everything changes, and here's practically how,

1. Pray – prayer brings power. The Spirit of power is given to those who pray
2. Acknowledge your weakness – bring it to God, the whole you
3. Desire to know Christ and Him crucified, for yourself and for all you know
4. Open your mouth – especially when every bone in your body is telling you to shut up
5. Remember once again the passion you had when you first knew Him and kindle that fire