

Power To Witness

'Now to Him Who, by His power that is at work within us, is able to do superabundantly, far over and above all that we ask for or think' (Ephesians 3:20).

In the above verse, Paul runs out of words to describe the result of using the power, God gives us through prayer. The power that propels the spiritual weapons to the place where they are needed, is the Holy Spirit. 'For the Kingdom of God is not based on words but on power' (1 Corinthians 4:20).

Two people can pray the exact same thing with two different results. It is not the words we use when we pray, it is in the power behind the words that bring the desired results. 'The Holy Spirit comes to our aid and bears us up in our weakness; for we do not know what prayer to offer nor how to offer it worthily as we ought, but the Spirit Himself goes to meet our supplication and pleads on our behalf with unspeakable yearnings and groanings too deep for utterance. And He Who searches the hearts of men, knows what is in the mind of the Holy Spirit because the Spirit intercedes and pleads before God on behalf of God's people, according to and in harmony with the will of God' (Romans 8:26 & 27).

In the measure we yield to the Holy Spirit, is the measure our prayers become effective. If we are not filled with the Holy Spirit, we can't yield to Him and our prayers will not be effective. The one and only power that makes our prayers effective, is the power of the Holy Spirit. 'Pray at all times – in the Spirit' (Ephesians 6:18). If we have not received the Holy Spirit, then it is impossible to pray in the Spirit. When Paul, the other apostles and the disciples preached the Gospel in the power of God, the whole of Asia heard the Word of God, the Lord did many miracles, and the Word of God prevailed (Acts 19:8,10, 20 & 26), much to the distress of some non-believers. At that time in history, the Gospel went out to the whole earth – to the ends of the earth. All Asia heard the Gospel as we just read. What is now Africa heard the Gospel through Philip and the Ethiopian man (Acts 8:26 to 40). Ethiopia was a Christian nation until fairly recently. Philip was caught away and was transported supernaturally to the area of what is now around Gaza, where he continued to preach the Gospel (Acts 8:40).

Jesus said, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). There is a difference between witnessing and being a witness. To witness is to merely to see an event with the eyes. To be a witness is to speak of the event with the mouth. Jesus said the Jews would be His witnesses; or they would speak of His ministry with His testimony. That is not the whole story. We also have to be a witness to the unsaved by the way we live. We need to be God's examples on earth – to be the salt or sweet seasoning of God (Matthew 5:13). We need to show His character, His nature, His love, His grace and we also need to explain about His judgement on those who refuse to believe. We can't say one thing with our mouths, and another with our lives. Our lives have to line up with what we say about the Lord. We need to talk about Jesus, and once we have their attention, then we can explain about other things regarding the Gospel. 'With great strength and power the apostles delivered their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Great grace rested upon them all' (Acts 4:33).

Witnessing is simply telling what God has done for us. His testimony is telling people what Jesus has done for us on the cross, and we need to tell the whole earth. People who have been saved from tragic lives by the blood of Jesus, can be very effective witnesses. The apostles witnessed about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and that He is alive. We need

to let everybody know that Jesus is alive. Some religious people today, just as religious people did in the days of the apostles, protest strongly when they are faced with the power of the blood of Jesus and His Name. 'We definitely commanded you not to teach about this Name (of Jesus); yet here you have flooded Jerusalem with your doctrine and you intend to bring this Man's blood upon us'. Then Peter and the apostles replied; "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:28 & 29). Under the power of the Holy Spirit, they had filled Jerusalem with the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus. That was done by every believer carrying His testimony.

'They have overcome the devil by means of the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony, for they did not love their life even when faced with death' (Revelation 12:11). This verse says, 'They overcame him (the devil)'. It is our responsibility to defeat him and that is why we have been given the weapons needed for this warfare; the belt of truth; the breastplate of righteousness; the preparation of the Gospel of peace; the shield of faith; helmet of salvation; and the sword of the Spirit' (Ephesians 6:10 to 17). 'For the weapons of our warfare are not physical, but are mighty and powerful for pulling down (evil) strongholds' (2 Corinthians 10:4). In return, two weapons the devil uses against us are guilt about sin and ignorance of our power, which weakens our determination. Once our sins are covered by the blood of Jesus and we walk in our new life free from guilt, we can have the power of God to overcome any situation (Romans 8:1 & 2). The Christians overcame him by the blood of the Lamb (Jesus) and word of their testimony and they did not love their lives unto death. It wasn't very important to them whether they lived or died. Doing the will of God was their priority, not living or dying. They were totally committed people. Just as Esther said, "If I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16), so we must have the same attitude.

We overcome by speaking about the Word of God and what the blood of Jesus does for us. Just as the blood of the lamb protected the children of Israel and then empowered them to escape from bondage, so now the blood of Jesus protects us and helps us to escape the spirit of bondage; the bondage of sin and fear (Romans 8:15). Paul compares the sacrificial Passover lamb to the sacrifice of Jesus at Passover. 'Purge the old leaven that you may be fresh new dough, still uncontaminated as you are, for the Messiah, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed in our place' (1 Corinthians 5:7). The Jews used a plant called hyssop which is a species of caper and grows on outside walls. The flower is a pale mauve shade, longish and shaped like a brush. The blood of the Passover lamb offered no protection until it was publicly displayed on the doors of the Israelites homes, by dipping hyssop into the blood and sprinkling it on the door posts (Exodus 12:22 & 23). So too, we need to protect ourselves and overcome spiritual death, not by using hyssop but by using our mouths to speak the testimony of Jesus. We overcome the devil by testifying what the Word of God says about Him. Without the testimony there is no protection. That is why the devil does not like people to give the testimony of Jesus; he has been defeated and does not want Christians to lay hold of that truth and use it to help empower others. We must not be ignorant of the power the Holy Spirit has given us.

The Holy Spirit has given us power to witness and testify. One symbol of the Holy Spirit is olive oil. 'This oil is the Word of the Lord, saying, "Not by might, not by power but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). It is the power of the Holy Spirit that empowers us to spread the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Amen and God bless you.

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