

New Testament Power Today (4)

I Thessalonians 1:5

Introduction

A. The Biblical reference to the power of God always have a goal in mind.

1. God does what He does for the glory of the Lord Jesus, Rom. 8:28,29.
2. God does what He does to redeem and set people free, Rom. 6:18-22.

B. God's power (His activity) is never neutral. If we are to know and experience the power of God -- we must be involved in the will of God.

1. This does not mean that we can every earn the grace of God, II Peter 1:3.
2. It does mean we should be primarily concerned about Him and His will. It is easy to be selfish and self-centered in wanting the power of God.

I. The Promise of Divine Power.

The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart, Hebrews 4:12

A. The position of the verse: it is in a context of warning. 3:7-4:13.

1. The admonition has to do with not hearing and obeying the Word of God.
2. The summary of the admonition is verse 11 -- we are to make every effort to enter into rest (the realization of the will of God).

B. The characteristics of the Word of God: "living and active, sharper."

1. Living and active speak of "constant powerful activity: and sharper points to the effectiveness of the Word.
2. This verse is at once a promise, an encouragement, and a rebuke. There is never a place for unbelief and disobedience because the Word is ...

C. The explanation: God's power accompanies His Word.

1. God always works through His Word, Genesis 1; John 6:63; James 1:18.
2. God's Word, His power and His will are inseparably related.

II. An illustration of Divine Power

And, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered ... Then said he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other. Matthew 12:10-13

A. Note the hopelessness of the situation regarding the man's ability.

B. Note the compassion of the Lord Jesus.

1. He saw in the man some of the effects of the Fall of Man.
2. The Lord Jesus was willing to heal the man even though it caused many of

C. Note how the power to heal -- accompanied the command to stretch forth the hand.

1. God's Word is the channel through which God brings His power to us.
2. In the areas of the will of God -- there is always power to obey.
 - a. It is the will of God we be delivered from the world.
Galatians 1:4; I John 2:15
 - b. It is the will of God we are sanctified. I Thess. 4:3; I Peter 1:13,14
 - c. It is the will of God we pray. Luke 18:1; John 14:13

D. God expects us to take Him at His Word, trust Him and obey Him

1. What would have happened to the man with the withered hand if he had not obeyed?
2. We must keep these factors in mind: God's Word, His Will, our trust, obedience.

III. The Requirements Regarding Divine Power.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Roman 12:1,2

A. The Exhortation: "Present your bodies a living sacrifice."

1. The reference to body -- indicates all the areas in which we express ourselves. The emphasis is on the totality of our functions: tongue, eyes, mind, etc.
2. This is a call for a full surrender to obedience -- doing the will of God in all areas of life -- in all of the ways we express ourselves.

B. The Instruction: "Be not conformed, but transformed."

1. The warning: "Worldliness will keep you from God's will and power."
2. The expression of hope: "You can be transformed by renewing your mind (attitude) through a study of God's Word, prayer and obedience."

C. The Explanation: "Only after surrender and obedience can you prove (test to be true) the will of God.

Conclusion: We must choose God's will fully -- honestly -- and then we will also know the experience of living with the power of God.