

New Testament Power Today
I Thessalonians 1

Introduction

- A. One of the characteristics of the Kingdom of God is power.

*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power (dunamis).
I Corinthians 4:20*

- B. Because the Kingdom of God is today manifested partially through the Church, we would expect the Church and her ministry to be characterized by power.

Because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power (dunamis), with the Holy Spirit and with deep convictions... I Thess. 1:5.

- C. Our purpose now is to determine the source and character of the New Testament power that is for today.

It is helpful to remember that the basis for a discussion on New Testament power begins in the call/anointing of the Lord Jesus (Isaiah 61, Luke 4) and the manifestation of that power in the book of Acts (which is a historical testimony to the work the Savior is still carrying on today (Acts 1:1,2)

I. The Source of the Power of God.

- A. The power of God is inseparably related to the presence of the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

But to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. I Corinthians 1:24

But you will receive power (dunamis) when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

- B. To neglect our Heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, in our quest for spiritual power, is a serious sin. All of us feel insulted when people manipulate us for some selfish gain. We must not insult God like that.

1. We must confess that too often we are more concerned with power than we are with God Himself.
2. We can easily test ourselves by monitoring our concerns and priorities.
 - a. Do we spend quality/heart time in worship?
 - b. When we have free time do we gravitate toward fellowship with God?
 - c. Are times of prayer and Bible study high on our priority list?
 - d. Is our primary desire in life the glory of God and our spiritual walk?
 - e. Why do we want God's power in our life? Could it be for a selfish reason?

II. The Character of the Power of God

- A. The power of God has been provided for the believer through the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. The power is always redemptive power -- designed to set us free from sin, produce holiness/fruitfulness in life, and to bring glory to God.

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.
II Peter 1:3

- B. The character of God's power is uniquely seen in the four deeds of redemption

1. The Crucifixion -- power to be free from the bondage of sin.

For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.
Romans 6:6

2. The Resurrection -- power to life above sin, in the holiness of life.

We were therefore buried with him through baptism unto death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Romans 6:4

3. The Ascension -- power to resist the Devil.

I pray the eyes of our heart may be enlightened in order that you may know ... his incomparable great power for us who believe. That power ... which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power, and dominion, and every title that can be given...Ephesians 1:18-21

4. The Day of Pentecost -- power to life and serve powerfully.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you... Acts 1:8

- D. These four redemptive deeds are also events of great revelatory clarity, God expects us to live in harmony with the meaning and power of the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the Day of Pentecost.

- E. Many Christians have been crying out to God for his power for years and have become disappointed and frustrated. They have failed to realize that the very foundation of God's kingdom, His work in the Church, and His will for the believer, is revealed in His Person and His work of Redemption.

- F. God will not, and cannot, give His power to those who choose to live a life out of harmony with His Person and work.

Conclusion: What do we need? The place to begin is in a total heart surrender to God and to His will for us as revealed in His redemptive deeds.