

Where to Get the Power You Need

Ephesians 1:15-21

“Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.”

As you look at the news and see all of the stuff that is happening in our world, and we often ask ourselves, “What kind of world are we living in? Is there anything that we can do?”

This segment of study strikes right at the heart of our deep need for power to make a difference – our strength to survive. We are surrounded by people that feel powerless most, if not all, of the time. Where do we get the *power to live in today’s crazy but very real world, in a world where sick things happen to good people, in a world where life seems to be this constant struggle?* **Where do we get the power to live in a world that is filled with these difficult questions?** And where do I get the *power to keep going every day of my life?*

The reality is this. God never promised you or I that life would be easy. Pain and sin are everywhere. **Not just in other states like California or New York and not just in other countries like Iraq.** Pain and sin are right here where we live. They are *filling our*

neighborhoods and they are lurking in the hearts and the bodies of the people that are sitting next to you. **Actually right now there are senseless tragedies happening to people all around us because they are living powerless lives.** Powerless lives might not force people to go on a crazy shooting rampage, but powerless people often are never able to live life to its fullest. It often keeps them from living life the way God intended it to be lived.

Tonight's study is designed to help us realize we do not have to live powerless lives. You and I do not have to look for other sources of power. God says, "I want you to have My power today and everyday, even in the midst of pain and suffering."

If you want to read about pain and suffering and mind-boggling tragedy, and an individual who did not run away from God, look at Job. I like what he said in 6:10, "At least I can take comfort in this: Despite the pain, I have not denied the words of the Holy One." **The Word of God makes us a promise.** The promise is this: *That you and I can experience God's unlimited, God's divine, God's supernatural power in our lives today and live the way He intended us to live and, when necessary, endure pain and hardship.*

God doesn't want us to just talk about power. He wants us to access it. 1 Corinthians 4:20 says, "The kingdom of God is not just fancy talk. It is living by God's power." This is the third segment in our series, "*How God Meets Your Deepest Needs.*" **What we will find at the end of the series is that every deep need that you and I live with - God has answered that need with His name.** In this segment we see that one of His names is El Shaddai, which means "I am your all powerful God." God knew that you and I would need His, for without it many of us would live powerless lives. Therefore, He says, "I am the answer to your need. I am your all powerful God." Psalm 68 says, "God is awesome. He gives power and strength to His people. Praise the Lord"

Most of us in here never question God's power. We know that God is powerful. We step outside and look at this incredible playground that we call earth and see God's power. **What you and I question is, Is God's power available to us? And if so, How do I get it?** Those are the questions that we have. I want to say, "Yes, you can get God's power. He promised it." **But before we talk about how to access it, I want to paint a picture of good news.** I want to take a look at four promises that God says, "I'll give you power when..." There are more than these, but these are very relevant to us today.

When can I count on God's power?

1. I CAN COUNT ON GOD'S POWER WHEN I AM TIRED. I don't even need to ask if you are tired – we live in America. We have lived our lives with the idea that we have go out and get what we want, and achieve everything we can, and now that we have achieved it, we are too tired to enjoy it! Our motto is, "Why stop and smell the roses when you can drive right through them and save time." And the result of our frenzied life-style we are a generation of stressed out people!

Obviously there are some things that you and I can do to slow the pace of our lives down, but in the midst of this, God makes us a promise in Isaiah 40, "The Lord is the everlasting God. He never grows tired or weary. He strengthens those who are weak and tired. Those who trust the Lord for help will find their strength renewed. He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; He offers strength to the weak." **Some of you need to memorize this verse!** Write it down and put it by your toothbrush, get a tattoo of it on your body, shave it on the side of your dog! I don't care where you put it, just put it someplace where you can be reminded of it. **This is a great verse that simply tells us that God's power is unlimited.** He never gets tired. He never gets weary. **He never goes to bed.** He has unlimited energy. He created the entire universe and said, "What's next?"

Would you like to tap into that kind of power? I am here to tell you tonight that it is absolutely available.

2. I CAN COUNT ON GOD'S POWER WHEN I HAVE NOTHING TO OFFER. This can be in a relationship where you feel like, "I just don't have anything left to give!" It could be with one of your children: "I just don't know what they want from me!" It could be with your job: "I am in this thing over my head, and the more I do the more I have to do!"

God says, "I will give you power when you do not feel like you have anything else to offer." When you feel inadequate for the task that you are facing.

God says, "My power will show up when you are weak." Paul said to God, "I have this affliction. Will You take it away from me?" God said, "No, My power shows up best in weak people." And I love what Paul says, "Now I am glad to boast about how weak I am. I am glad to be a living demonstration of Christ's power instead of showing off my own power and abilities."

God makes us a promise concerning His power. He says, "When you feel inadequate, when you feel like you have nothing else to offer, I will invade your life with My very own power." Do you need to tap into God's divine power for your life? It is available.

3. I CAN COUNT ON GOD'S POWER WHEN I AM IN PAIN. Some of the pain that is in this room is very real, and very hard. I sat down and made a list that deals with the pain that we experience.

Maybe some of us in this room may have come from a lousy family or marriage situations. The relational dynamics are terrible, and there are some pain-filled memories that still linger in your mind, so much so, that you don't even want to go back there. That is a major source of pain.

Some of the *pain* in this room has to do with your own *bodily pain*. Some of you have some affliction that you live with. And Satan has convinced you that tomorrow morning when you wake up you are going to have the same affliction and you are so tired of the struggle. That is a major source of pain.

Some of you in here may be in less than ideal *work* situations. You don't like your job, and yet, you feel locked in by your circumstances and cannot do anything about it. You go to work on Monday, to unrealistic quotas and impossible deadlines and it is grinding you down. That is a major source of pain.

Some of you in here may have gone through the trauma of a *separation or divorce*. It is not your fault and you do not want to see it happen. That is a major source of pain.

Some of you may have *lost loved ones*. After all of your years together, you feel lost and nowhere to turn. That is a major source of pain.

Some of us have *friendships that are fractured*. Friends that you have trusted and confided in through the years, and now, because of some misunderstanding, that friendship has fallen apart. That is a major source of pain.

Some of you may have constant *financial pressures on your life*. Maybe you have made some bad decisions, or maybe you have experienced problems in the work place, or maybe you have experienced an injury and have had to be out of work, and you see no way out of your situation. That is a major source of pain.

Some of you may be *watching your kids making stupid decisions, and their lives are self-destructing, and it is breaking your heart*. You have tried everything that you know to do and nothing seems to get through to them. That is a major source of pain.

Some of you may be sick of being single. You are not dating anyone and marriage seems a long way off or even an unrealistic dream and the loneliness sometimes seems unbearable. That is a major source of pain.

None of us are immune from pain. It is inevitable that you and I will experience the kind of soul-piercing heartbreak that comes from some loss, or from some circumstance, that seems almost too painful to bear. It is during those times that God does His best work!

Psalm 41 says, “The Lord nurses them when they are sick and eases their pain.” When, as a child of God, we access God’s power, it so invades our life that it satisfies our soul, even in the midst of our pain. Do you want to tap into that kind of power? It is available.

4. I CAN COUNT ON GOD’S POWER WHEN I AM TEMPTED.

One of the reasons that some of the pain is in our life is because we haven’t had the power to say no to temptation. Paul understood this and wrote in Romans 7, “I often find that I have the will to do good, but no the power.” Can anybody relate to that statement? He says, “I want to do what is right, but I don’t have the power to overcome the temptation!” Temptation is out there for each of us; we just have to make some hard choices!

I saw this bumper sticker that said: “Lead us not into temptation; I am perfectly capable of finding it on my own.” I can relate to that. If you are setting there saying, “I am not tempted,” you are what is called a liar. Temptation is inevitable but the good news is God will not let us be tempted beyond our own capacity to handle it. God is faithful and gives you the power to say no when you are tempted. 1 Corinthians 10 tells us that God gives us the power to say “No,” “Every temptation that has come your way is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps His promise, and He will not allow you to be tempted beyond your power to resist. At the time you are tempted He will give you strength to endure it and so provide you with a way out.” The promise

is this: there is always a way out. Here is the question: **Do you take it?** God says, “I want to give you the power for the way out.” **Do you need to access that type of power?** It is available.

The bottom line to these four promises is I feel like God is saying, “When you are burned out and tired I want to give you My power. In the midst of your feeling inadequate with your life, I want to give you power. I want to give you My power to you can handle the devastating hurt that you’re going through right now ... When you feel like you’re tempted beyond your control, I want to give you My power ...” **That, my friend, is the good news of today.** It really is good news. We do not have to live powerless, weak lives.

Paul understood God’s power when he said, Philippians 4:13, “I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me.” I know some of might be thinking, “God may give you the power, preacher, but He does not work like that with me. I am just an average Christian. I love God and everything but frankly, I am fatigued, I am stressed. My kids are out of control. My heart has been broken. My prayers don’t seem to be answered. I don’t see God’s power in my life.”

Do you know how I would respond to you? I would say that **God’s power is not automatic.** As a matter of fact, I have seen a lot of Christians who live their life with no more power than a non-Christian. They may have salvation and God’s presence, but they live with no more power.

God does the impossible – He provides us with His power. But we do the possible. We do the possible, but because of our faith, God will do the impossible.

I want to give you some action steps of what you and I can do to receive God’s power. I have listed them as A-B-C. It may not be as easy as ABC but it may be a little more memorable this way.

A – Admit that you need God's power. If you want God's power, admit you need it. This is where I admit my lack of power, I admit that I do not have it all together, and I admit that I cannot solve everything on my own. **For some of us this part is really tough, because we like to think we have it all together and we can do this.** If you are thinking like that, who are you kidding? You can't control everything. **You are not going to reach every goal you have set.** You are not going to make as much money as you have dreamed of. You are human, and you need God's power.

When we pretend to be self sufficient – and the key word is “pretend” – we short circuit God's power for our lives. If you want access to God's power, this is the starting point. You drop to your knees and you admit that you need God's help. **The Bible is filled with verses on pride.** The Bible tells us that God does not hate many things but one of the things He hates is pride. Pride says, “I don't need God.” Pride says, “I've got it all together.” Proverbs says, “Pride ends in humiliation. While humility (admitting my need to depend on God) brings honor.” If you want God's power, at some point in your life, you have got to get rid of this steering wheel and say, “God, You take control. I am going to set shotgun. You get in the driver's seat of my life.” **It is only then that you open up the channels for God's power.** It starts with this admission – admitting that we need God's power in our lives to make it.

B – Be connected to the source of power. This seems to be so simply that we often miss it altogether. Get connected and committed to the sovereign God of this universe. **For years I have had a theory that goes like this: things work best when they are plugged in.** You and I work best when we are plugged in to the creator of the universe. If you have a toaster, try to do toast something without plugging it in. **It is not going to work.** I don't care how good looking that toaster is, I don't care the net worth of that toaster, I don't care if that toaster grew up in the church kitchen its entire life, **it is not**

going to work if it is not plugged in and neither are you. It is absolutely necessary to get connected and committed.

Jesus understood this connection theory and He gives us a word picture. I love the way Jesus taught because it was so visual. Jesus said in John 15, “I am the vine and you are the branches. Those who remain in Me (those who are connected with Me) and I in them, they will produce much fruit. For apart from Me you can do nothing.”

Listen, it is God’s desire to use you, and to meet your needs. As a matter of fact, the Bible tells us in Revelation 4:20 that God stands at the door and He knocks, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” **God is standing right there and He is waiting for us to open the door.** If you have been saved for any length of time, I can tell you that at times, you just simply feel like you are unplugged. **There are times when prayers do not seem to get through.** There are times that it seems there is no anointing. There are times when it seems that all feeling is gone, and you are just going through the motions. **That is why Mountain Grove exists to help you get plugged and stay plugged into a right relationship with God.**

I really am a pretty easy going individual, but the times I get a little wild is when people say, “I just can’t grow at Mountain Grove.” **I just want to slap them!** There are so many opportunities at this church. We have so many groups and Bible studies, resources and tools and mentors. **If you want to grow, we have some help for you.** That is one of the advantages of a big church – we have a ministry for you. If you are not staying committed and connected, don’t blame God, and don’t blame the church. **The best place to look is in the mirror.**

C – Trust God’s promises when the going gets tough. Sometimes this is the toughest part. The Bible makes it very, very clear that God’s power and my faith are connected, as seen in Hebrews 11:6, “But

without faith it is impossible to place him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarded of them that diligently seek him.” **For me to get God’s power, I’ve got to step out in faith.** **But, what is faith?** Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” The Greek reads like this, “Faith is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen.” **It means I step out in obedience to what God calls me to do before the power shows up.** That is a key word – *before*. God wants us to take action before He supplies the power. Some of you may be thinking, “You mean I have to take action and act as if I have the power even before I have the power in order to get the power?” **Absolutely!** That is where faith enters in.

You see, the problem with too many Christians is that they want to make sure that God has provided for all of their needs before they commit to going and doing. Well, let me assure you that God has already met those needs, but He will not move until you do! I like the advice the old preacher gave the young preacher as he was going into the minister, “If God tells me to run through a brink wall, the running is my part, and the brink wall is God’s responsibility.”

B and C work very closely together. When I am committed and connected with God, my choices become a lot clearer. Notice that I did not say my choices are easier. **There are no easy choices in life, but they become clearer.** So when I trust God and stand on His promises, He says, “Ok, now My power is going to show up.” He sees our faith and He turns on the power.

You could read the Bible from cover to cover and you would find event after event, story after story, of this principle – you choose God’s way and God’s power shows up. Have you seen *Prince of Egypt*? If you didn’t, you can read the book – the Bible. **Tonight, I will give you Cliff’s Notes Version: In Egypt, Pharaoh is the leader of Egypt and he has the Israelites as slaves.** It is a terrible situation for these Israelites. They are God’s people. Moses, representing God and

God's people, goes to Pharaoh and says, "Let my people go." **God wants them out of slavery and out of Egypt.** Pharaoh keeps saying, no and plagues come on Egypt. And finally after the tenth plague, Pharaoh puts up his hands and says, "Ok, they can go." Moses marches the Israelites out of Egypt.

Imagine being a slave for years and now you are free. They are dancing and they are singing and having a good old time marching out of Egypt. Back in Egypt, Pharaoh all of a sudden goes, "What did I just do?" He starts thinking about all the slaves and the free labor – a recession, a depression – and he goes, "I must have been crazy to let them go! Who is going to make bricks in the hot sun? Who is going to clean the bathroom? Who is going to do all this stuff?" **So he calls out the Egypt National Guard and says go get them.** Imagine you are an Israelite and you are kind of singing and dancing and marching to freedom and all of a sudden you look over your shoulder and you see the Egyptian army coming after you with obvious evil intent. In front of you is a sea. **They are chasing you into a sea.** It's a holocaust in the making.

Now, all of a sudden, they think they are going to get killed and they start going crazy. They say to Moses in Exodus 14, "Then they turned against Moses and complained, 'Why did you bring us out here to die in the wilderness? Weren't there enough graves for us in Egypt? Why did you make us leave? Our slavery was far better than us dying out here in the wilderness.'"

I wonder if some of us say that sometimes. "Our powerless life was far better than stepping out in faith." But Moses told the people, "Don't be afraid. Just wait and watch what God will do."

Would you take that answer? Think about it: You are thinking, "I am either going to get drowned or killed and Moses says, "Relax, pal! And watch what God will do." The Bible says, "The Lord Himself will fight for you. You won't have to lift a finger in defense." **And we know**

what happens - God speaks and the ocean opens up. God's power arrives as they took that step in faith.

I could go from story to story. You could do the same thing. The principle is you choose God's way and God's power shows up.

Moses did not know how God was going to intervene until he trusted in God's power and he kept walking.

God says to each of us tonight, "I will honor your faith by a display of My supernatural power. I will give you power along the way." But, the problem with most of us is that we do not want the power along the way, we want the power before we go. We want the power before the crisis. We want the power before the showdown. We want the power before the ocean's edge. And the result is that we have very few victories and our Christian life.

But the Bible teaches that God supplies power along the way according to our faith. And the same God who intervened and expressed His power throughout the pages of the Bible is the same God who says to you today, right now, "I want to infuse your life with My power." Admit that you need His power, stay connected to the source of power and choose God's way with faith that God's power will show up.

People say, "How do I know it works that way?" Because the Bible promises it. I have seen it in the lives of hundreds of people that I have met with and counseled with. I have seen it in this church. I see it in my life.

What about you? What do you do with this message? What do you do from here?

It is a message for everybody. If you are a parent, tomorrow after work, when you are tired, when you are fatigued, when you are

stressed and you want to walk into the house and maybe you don't want to play with your kids or talk to your spouse. You just want to go in and say, "Don't bug me!" Maybe what you do is set in the driveway for a minute and admit, "God, I feel really weak right now. I am really tired. But I am going to go in the house and I am going to act as if I had Your power and Your strength and Your energy and love my kids the way I know You want them loved because You have entrusted their care to me. I am going to go in and treat my spouse the way I know you want me to treat him/her. And I am going to expect Your power along the way."

Isaiah 40:31 says, "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary." We do the possible with faith that God will do the impossible. That is the way it works.

Are these easy steps? No. But they are good steps. And when you move in the direction that God wants you to take, His power will show up. You do the possible with faith that God will do the impossible. But this power that we are talking about, the only other condition that I have not told you about is, *you do not get the power without the Person.* The person is Jesus Christ. That is why at the beginning of the message on the verse that says, "He gives power and strength to His people," The Bible says in Romans 8:17, "And since we are His children [His people] we will share His treasures. For everything God gives to His son, Christ, is ours, too." It is living by God's power.