

Omnipotence and God's Power for Living

Isaiah 40:12-31

Preached by Phillip Kayser at DCC on Sunday, May 19th 2024

I. Introduction

A. Review

Two weeks ago we started a mini-series on the attributes of God that I have titled, "Lord, I want to know You." This is not just knowing intellectual facts *about* God (as important and necessary as those facts are), but going beyond the theology into knowing God *Himself*.

In the first sermon I set the foundation by looking at a number of Scriptures which call us into relationship with God. We looked at what it meant to be alienated from God and what it means to be reconciled to God and even to be ushered into the fellowship that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have with each other. By union with Jesus, we can share in that fellowship. As J. I. Packer said, there is a "tremendous difference between knowing the Word of God and knowing the God of the Word." And I won't have time to summarize what we said in that sermon.

Last week we looked at God's attribute of omnipresence. Since God is everywhere present, why does the Bible command us to seek Him? Why do saints like David sometimes feel like God is so far off? He is not *spatially* far away. But He can become distant from us in terms of *relationship* just like a husband and a wife can feel distant while being in the same home. And we went through the incredible benefits of practicing the presence of God. The more conscious we are of His presence and His attributes being *for* us, the more our faith grows and the more our relationship with God grows. And I obviously cannot repeat the things we talked about in *that* sermon either.

Today I want to examine the doctrine of God's omnipotence.

B. Metamorphosis of a caterpillar

But let me start with a silly parable. It's a parable about a caterpillar. Suppose you were in your backyard and overheard a caterpillar say, "Oh, how I'd love to become a brightly colored butterfly. I've been crawling around in this lousy yard trying to look colorful. I've been trying to leap from branch to branch and stay airborne long enough to learn to fly. I'm *committed*; I'm *committed* to being a butterfly, so I'm going to hang in there. But I'm beginning to think that even though others become butterflies, there's something wrong with me, and I'm nothing but a brown, boring, branch crawling butterfly, and that's what my destiny holds for me."

Now if you heard that conversation, you might be tempted to tell the caterpillar that all the commitment in the world is not going to change him into a butterfly. What it takes is God's *power* to metamorphose him from a caterpillar into a brilliant flying butterfly.

I'm sure that some of you can identify with that caterpillar. You're frustrated and weary with failed attempts at transforming yourself into something with lasting results. There are areas of your life where you feel totally weak or out of control. Well, take heart. Paul went through *exactly* that frustration. Romans 7 describes *the frustration of self-transformation without the power of God*. Paul said,

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate, I do... For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out." (Rom. 7:15,18b)

If that is your testimony then this sermon is for you. Perhaps you are one of those who starts great, but has a hard time carrying through. You've started at least 25 diets, you've started having devotions at least a hundred times; you've started being consistent with disciplining your children; you've started a dozen other things. How do I keep going even when the going is tough? In Psalm 6 David said, "I am worn out, Oh Lord; give me strength; I am completely exhausted, and my whole being is deeply troubled." (Psalm 6:2,3). Some of you may feel like that *might* be your life verse.

So what do we do when we realize that our ability does not match up to what we know needs to be done? God has good news for you. The good news is that His omnipotence is not just an abstract doctrine. In past weeks we have seen that God is *for* you in His person and in His presence. Today we want to look at how He is for you in His attribute of omnipotence. Omnipotence is a big word that just means He is all-powerful.

II. How Powerful Is God? Does He Continue To Wield This Power?

A. God's Power Seen In Creation (Gen. 1; Isaiah 40:26,29; 42:5;45:12; etc.) is the same power God's people can experience in their lives (Is. 40:25-31; 42:5-9; 45:11-13; 2 Cor. 4:6)

What kind of power does God have? Let's take a peek at His creation. Science books tell us that our sun radiates more energy in one second than man has used since the beginning of creation. That's a lot of power in our one sun. Yet there are suns in our Milky Way galaxy that are 100 times larger than our sun. And our Milky Way Galaxy is estimated to have somewhere between 100 billion to 400 billion stars. So if there are several hundred billion stars in our *one* galaxy, how many *galaxies* are out there? Estimates range from 100 billion to 200 billion galaxies in the universe, and our methods of measurement may have missed many.

But lets just look at the power of a quasar. A typical quasar throws out enough energy in one second to supply present electrical needs on planet earth for billions of years. The most powerful quasars have luminosity thousands of times greater than the *entire* Milky Way with its 100s of billions of stars. That's just one quasar. Yet scientists have identified about a million quasars. It just shows the vastness of our universe, and the enormous energy contained in the universe. It's mind-boggling. Yet Genesis 1 says that God made it all by

simply commanding it into existence, and it was so. His power is far greater than all the power in our universe.

Well, here's the point - there are many passages which describe God's creative power when He made this universe that go on to say that this *same* power is working on *our* behalf.

Look at Isaiah 40, the passage we read earlier. It is a wonderful description of God's omnipotence, but it doesn't give us the doctrine of God's omnipotence in the abstract. Look at the *application* of His omnipotence in verses 28-31. It says,

Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not grow weary, they shall walk and not faint.

He is promising that this same power can help us in our weakness. No wonder Paul said, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" It's not enough to know that God is omnipotent. The question this morning is "Are you in such a relationship with God that you *experience* His power? That's what I want for each of you.

B. God's Power Seen In Providence (Jeremiah 31:35; Heb. 1:3) is the same power God's people can experience in their lives (Jer. 31:31-40; Philippians 3:21)

Or switching gears, we can look at the enormous power of God that is displayed in God's *ordinary* providence. Hebrews 1:3 says that God the Son is "upholding all things by the word of His power." He is holding the cells of your body together - including any cancer cells that are not functioning normally. God is in control of that.

In our Joshua series we saw that not so much as a dice can be cast without the whole disposing of it coming from the Lord. That's as clear a statement as you can get that there is no such thing as blind chance or luck. Another passage shows that when an arrow is shot without any purpose whatsoever on the part of the shooter, God still directs the arrow to its spot and He still has a purpose for that random arrow. He raises up and casts down, He allows the Mordecai's of this world to gain control in politics and then in a carefully orchestrated way he shows *His* control and man's impotence. And Jeremiah 31 says that the God who controls all creation with His power exercises that power in a loving way on behalf of His people. Praise God!

C. God's Power Seen In Christ's Life continues to work in the lives of His people (John 14:12; Eph. 1:19; 1 Cor. 1:24; 6:14; 2 Cor. 10:4; 13:3; Phil. 3:10)

The Gospels show the incredible power which Christ exercised because He was God. But His power continues to be available to us when we have faith in Him. John 14:12 says, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father." Do we really believe that? I think sometimes we doubt it.

Or look at Ephesians 1:19. Ephesians is really a book which you need to pray through and claim for yourself. It's a marvelous book. It describes the incredible inheritance that we have in Christ. But let me read Ephesians 1:19: It says, "and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His might power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places." Did you get that? The same power which raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him at God's right hand to rule over this universe continues to be at work in those who believe. And this is part of Paul's prayer concerning the things he wanted the *Ephesians* to understand and experience in *their* lives. It wasn't automatic. He wanted them to have the needed faith to enter into the *experience* of God's power. But for many of us, God's omnipotence remains simply a doctrine. We have a recipe but we have failed to eat the cake. We know *about* God, but to what degree have we experienced the reality of His Person and His attributes in our day-to-day lives? That's the question I want to continue to probe today.

D. God's Power Is Unlimited in our lives (Col. 1:11)

Paul's prayer to the Colossians was that they might be "...strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy..." In other words, the Bible doesn't just *describe* God's omnipotence. It tells us that God gives us His power for living (which is point number II). And part of that living is to have joyful patience when everyone around is lacks joy and is very impatient. In other words, Paul expects His power to be relevant to our daily lives.

III. God Gives Power For Living

A. Every believer has some power for living (John 14:12; 2 Tim. 1:7; cf. Rom. 5:6) and those who don't have a sham Christianity (2 Tim. 3:5). We must "turn away" from those who have a Christian talk but deny the power (2 Tim. 3:5).

In point II I give Scriptures which say that every believer has *already* experienced that power to *some* degree. If you are a believer, God used His power to change your heart from self-absorption into delighting to be His servants. That's remarkable. For some of you (like

the Jameses) it happened very quickly. For others it was gradual. But God's power was at work in making you Christians, and God's power *continues* to be at work in you.

2 Timothy 1:7 says, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." If you have the Spirit, you are indwelt with the omnipotent Spirit of power and love who helps us to have a sound mind.

Romans 5:6 describes unbelievers as those who "were still without power [or without strength]..." What does that say about believers? They *have* God's power within them. Yet we often live below the privileges granted to us.

And what is God's attitude to Christians who *deny* God's power? He doesn't think too highly of them. 2 Timothy 3:5 says that we ought to turn away from theologians who deny such power. It says, "...having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away." A theology of God without the power of God is just as dangerous as people like Simon Magus who were seeking power without seeking God. You can't separate God from His power or from His theology. As we have been seeing in this series, every attribute of God is a window through which we can understand and experience the whole of God - including His other attributes.

B. However we must grow in our experience of this power both individually (Acts 9:22; Is. 40:29; Prov. 24:5; Eph. 3:16; cf. 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Thes. 4:1) and corporately (Acts 9:31; 19:20; 2 Cor. 13:3; cf. Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19). The more faith we have in God's power, the more God's power can be manifested (2 Cor. 10:15).

Of course, just because we have experienced God's power in *some* measure in our lives (as every Christian has) does not mean that we are experiencing it as fully as we should. We must be *continually* growing in the experience of His power. Acts 9:22 says, "And Saul increased more and more in power, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ." He increased more and more in power. That's God's goal for us. The closer we walk with God, the more of His power we will experience. Isaiah 40:29 says, "He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength." That's what we want - for God's strength to be increased in us. In Ephesians 3:16 Paul prays, "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man..." Psalm 84:7 says of believers that "they go from strength to strength."

But in *contrast*, Scripture also talks of some saints growing *more and more weak*. That too is a possibility. Even Gary's and my ministries can be limited by the degree of faith that you as a congregation have. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 10:15: "that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere..." That's quite something - that *Paul's* ministry sphere was greatly enlarged because of the faith of the saints in his churches. I'm just trying to give you a little picture of what it means to *know* the God of all power.

C. God's purpose in manifesting His power in our lives is to transform us.

1. Now (Phil 2:13; Rom. 8:29; 12:2; 2 Cor. 3)

What is God's purpose in manifesting His power in our lives? It is nothing less than being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. That conforming to Christ is gradual, but eventually God will make us perfect in heaven. One author put it this way:

"You must realize from the outset that the goal toward which he is beginning to guide your life is absolute perfection... we may be content to remain, what we may call, ordinary, but the Holy Spirit is determined to carry out quite a different plan."

God's plan for your life is not to keep you from pain, or suffering, or discomfort. It is to make you more and more like Christ when He faced pain, suffering, and discomfort. He wants to turn ordinary men, women and children like you and me into extraordinary examples of courage, love, purity, honesty, and humility.

The thing that makes me weep the most when I read great Christian biographies is not the spectacular things that sometimes happen (like healings and miracles), even though those things *are* wonderful demonstrations of power. But what melts my heart is to see the degree of self-effacing, sacrificial love and humble service that God produced in a Florence Nightengale, or the degree of love and forgiveness that God gave to Corrie ten Boom's sister in the concentration camp, or the degree of joy that God gave to Richard Wurmbrand under torture. These are not natural any more than it is natural for a caterpillar to fly. Many Christians are content with the same love, joy, and courage that unbelievers have. But God wants us to experience *more* than what unbelievers have. He wants us to experience *supernatural* love, joy, and courage. And that requires His power applying His other attributes of love, joy, and courage to us.

2. In the resurrection of our bodies and renewal of the universe (Phil. 3:21)

And ultimately, that power will convert the nations, bring in a world of righteousness, resurrect our bodies and completely renew this universe. Philippians 3:21 says that the Lord Jesus "...will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." Verse after verse shows the stunning power that God has promised to exercise on behalf of His saints.

D. Some of the ways God's power is evidenced in the lives of those who walk in the Spirit

Let's look at some of the examples of power that God brings into the lives of those who are willing to walk in the Spirit.

1. The spectacular

We will start with the spectacular, even though that is really not my *main* focus. But when you understand the omnipotence of God, these spectacular things should not be surprising at all.

a) Healings (Mark 5:30; Luke 5:17; 6:19; 8:46; 4:14; 9:1; 10:19; etc.)

When Jesus healed people, various Scriptures say that He noticed that power had gone out of Him. In Mark 5:30 a woman touched his robe in faith, and the text says,

And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?"

That is one of many passages that indicate that there can be a transference of power from Christ to us. Luke 5:17 says, "And the power of the Lord was present to heal them." All healings - whether done through Jesus, through the apostles, or through us, is 100% the power of God at work. This is the God that we are seeking to draw near to in this series. As Paul worded it in Philippians 3:10, "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death." Notice that His power doesn't remove sufferings or even death; *but* it helps us to approach those things in a totally different way.

b) Miracles (Ps. 77:14; Rom. 15:17; Acts 6:8)

And all miracles showcase God's power. Acts 6:8 says, "Stephen, full of faith and power [those two go together- "full of faith and power"], did great wonders and signs among the people." It was because he was full of God's power that he could do those miracles.

2. The normal

But let's spend some time on what we consider to be *ordinary* aspects of Christianity. Actually, the more you dig into the ordinary Christian life, the more you realize that *it is anything but ordinary*.

a) Power needed for our salvation (Rom. 1:16)

God's power is at work every time a person becomes a Christian. Romans 1:16 says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation..." Charismatics sometimes speak of power encounters as if those only happen when a healing or wonder happens, but Paul says that every time a person comes to Christ there has been a power encounter. There are several Scriptures that say that there is no way that anyone would turn to Christ apart from the power of God's grace at work in him. Saul was dead-set on exterminating the church, and in a moment of time God converted him and turned him into a firebrand for the Gospel.

You might think that it is impossible to overturn abortion in our nation, or it is impossible for our nation to become a Christian nation once again. Nonsense! Consider the incredibly wicked city of Nineveh that Jonah was sent to preach to. The book of Jonah says that God

took the weakness of Jonah's preaching (even with His bad attitudes) and God's power soundly converted every man, woman, and child in that city in one day. America is not too difficult for God. He is omnipotent even in His work of grace.

And God loves to work His power through agents of faith; *weak* agents of faith who are convinced that Jeremiah was true when he said that nothing was too difficult for God. He said, "Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You." When we get involved in politics we must be convinced of that, and not try to use the tactics, strategies, and manipulations of the world to only achieve what we think is possible.

Last week I talked about practicing the presence. Well, if you practice the presence of the omnipotent God when you engage in politics and it will elevate your faith on what is achievable. It will make you shoot for a much higher goal than most Christians tend to shoot at. Most Christians who are involved in politics will only seek to achieve what the flesh can achieve. William Wilberforce was a politician who was a rebuke to those kinds of Christians. He sought to represent *Christ* in politics, and he had faith that *God's power could do the impossible in politics*. And God blessed his faith by *doing* the impossible. And there have been many politicians down through history who have experienced the same miracles in politics. Our God is omnipotent!

When your children display hard hearts, it should drive you to your knees and ask the God who alone can change hearts to display the power of His grace in the hearts of your children. He *alone* can turn the hearts of the children to the fathers and the hearts of the fathers to the children (Malachi 4:6). Don't engage in parenting in your own power and wisdom. You have access to the omnipotence of God to change your children's hearts.

So when you start doing the steps I outlined last week for practicing the presence, do it with a consciousness of His attribute of omnipotence. It will elevate your faith to expect great things *from* God and to attempt great things *for* God. It will give you faith to begin to expect the *extraordinary* in the lives of your children.

b) Power for ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Col. 1:29)

Likewise, every aspect of ministry that the elders or deacons engage in should be done with a dependence upon God's power. The disciples had experienced this power in their own lives, but over time they began to *grow* in their experience of God's power. Acts 1:8 records Christ's promise to them, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." And what was the result of this power that came into their lives? It took away their fear, gave them boldness, and gave their witness an effectiveness they would not otherwise have had.

c) Power for witness (Acts 4:33).

Acts 4:33 says, "And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all."

d) Power for preaching (1 Thes. 1:5; 1 Cor. 1:17; 2:4-5).

The Puritans spoke not only of that kind of power in witness, but *also* spoke of *preaching* transformed by such power. Sometimes they would call it a baptism in the Holy Spirit or an anointing. But however you want to describe it, we need to pray that my sermons would avoid the sterility of merely communicating information. Paul said, "And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."

e) Power for giving us hope, peace and joy (Rom. 15:13)

Or consider the power of God that is at work every time He gives us hope, or peace, or joy in the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13 says, "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." When you lose hope or peace or joy Paul says that you need an encounter with the God of all power. God is powerful enough and has enough resources to change any bad human disposition into a godly one. He has done that with me many times in an instant. Don't feel hopeless over your sanctification. You have immediate access by faith to the God of all power.

But the point of these verses is that you can only abound in hope, peace, and joy inexpressible after the power of the Holy Spirit comes upon you. It is not something that is natural to man. It is supernatural, and we must seek it from God. Don't be satisfied with anything less than experiencing the God of all power in your day-to-day walk.

f) Power to resist Satan (Eph. 6:10; 2 Chron. 29:12)

Of course, Scripture speaks of the power that is needed to be able resist Satan or any of his demons. I happen to believe that Satan is already bound in the pit and that we are progressively binding more and more demons to the pit. But there are still millions (and perhaps even billions) of demons who represent Satan's kingdom. They are all on a warpath against Christians. Those demons are fallen angels who have far more power than any human has, and we would have no power against them at all if God's power was not working through us. Take that seriously.

In describing the armor of God which we are to put on, Paul makes clear in Ephesians 6 that the armor comes from God and the strength to use it comes from God. It is by union with Christ that we can resist even the strongest of demons so that he flees from us. And so Paul says, "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." It's not automatic. He is commanding you to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." If you have never experienced this, you need to revisit sermons one and two in this series and use the steps outlined there to connect you to the God of all power.

g) Power for patience (Col. 1:11)

But what about an ordinary thing like patience? There is such a thing as patience that simply comes from our flesh. But that counterfeit patience is quite different from the patience that is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. If the only patience you experience is the kind of

patience that any unbeliever can have, you have not yet known the power of God in your patience.

Colossians 1:11 says that we are to be “strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, *for all patience and longsuffering with joy.*” Did you get that? In order to have supernatural patience and longsuffering with joy we need to be strengthened with all might according to His glorious power. And I give numerous Scriptures which show that every aspect of the Christian walk is intended to be lived in the power of the Holy Spirit.

h) Power needed to make church discipline effective (1 Cor. 5:14)

Point h shows that if church discipline is to be effective, it must be accompanied by the power of *God's* discipline. Church discipline should not be seen as a way of getting rid of a divisive member. No. When done correctly, it is harnessing the power of God Himself to discipline the wayward so that the wayward is brought to repentance. It's intended to be restorative. And when we come to God *in humility and faith*, this power *will* be unleashed. I have over and over again seen the power of God's discipline accompanying good church discipline. Almost immediately after the church discipline, God has unleashed financial problems, health problems, car problems, emotional problems, and even disaster after disaster into a person's life. I think of one case of a particularly obstinate person where God finally took him out. But to me this is an evidence of God's love for that person. Whom the Lord loves, He disciplines.

i) Power for prayer (Eph. 3:20; James 5:16)

Point i talks about the need for power in our prayers, and this is because elsewhere we are commanded to pray in the Spirit. What does it mean to pray in the Spirit? I believe it means that the Spirit impels us to prayer, guides our prayer, injects faith into our prayers, and carries those prayers to heaven's throne.

j calls for power to endure suffering, k speaks of God's power preserving us, l of His power enabling us to effectively confront sin. That's actually a very interesting point. Let's say that the Spirit moves you to confront a sin in your child's life, or perhaps in a fellow-believer's life. Listen to what Micah 3:8 says. It says, “But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD, and of justice and might, *to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.*” He needed God's attributes of power, justice, and might to effectively confront sins in a way where the rebuke would not be simply blown off.

I hope after listening to the past two sermons you are seeing that true fellowship with God is experiencing the reality of God's ministry in your life and connecting with all of His attributes. When God manifests Himself tangibly in your life, He will often highlight an attribute that is needed - pressing comfort to your heart, or love, or patience, or some other attribute that is needed. But numerous times God has given me the faith to lay claim to His power to do the impossible things He has called me to do.

j) Power needed to endure suffering in a godly way (2 Tim. 1:8)

k) Power to preserve us (1 Pet. 1:5)

l) Power for confronting sin (Micah 3:8).

m) Power for taking on the kingdom of Satan (Luke 4:36; Acts 10:38) in spiritual warfare (2 Cor. 10:1-6).

And when you are invading Satan's territory (whether in evangelism, business, or politics), you need His power to break through. Point m says that it takes His power to progressively take territory from Satan's kingdom. And God has given me faith to begin asking God to restore nations that have been robbed from Christ's kingdom with fourfold restitution - which means that if God is to give Jesus justice (and Jesus deserves justice, doesn't He?), then justice demands fourfold restitution; it demands that former Christian nations that were stolen from Christ become four times more Christian than they were before. Can God do that? Yes. He is omnipotent.

Paul spoke of

...some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

Does that even remotely resemble the way Christians confront strongholds in the political arena or in other areas of life? It needs to. Those are Satanic strongholds. And we need to have faith when we enter into the political arena that the omnipotent God accompanies us when He calls us. Let me read that passage again and apply that passage to how *you* deal with the demonic strongholds in our culture. Paul describes Christians who had a super low vision of what Paul was doing. Paul said,

...some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. 3 For though we walk *in* the flesh, we do not war *according* to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...

Brothers and sisters, that is talking about God's power linking us to His holiness, to His wisdom, to His grace, and to His promised purposes for planet earth. Our faith must reach far higher than we tend to reach for.

n) The entire Christian walk (2 Thes. 1:11; 2 Pet. 1:3) and all things that pertain to godliness flow out of the promise of "His divine power" (2 Pet. 1:3)

Point n shows that the entire Christian life is supposed to be the outworking of God's divine power. 2 Thesalonians 1:11 summarizes the Christian life when it says, "Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power." 2 Peter tells us "Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness."

So I would encourage you to sometime think of all of God's attributes through the lens of His attribute of omnipotence, and I think it will help to increase your faith. His holiness being transferred into your life may seem hopeless until you realize that His power accompanies that holiness. And the same is true of all the other attributes.

Last week we saw how the Gospel helps us to see God as wonderfully present in *everything* we do. His presence must be related to mundane things like hygiene, finances, and marital intimacy. His presence must be related to how we do our politics, our farming, and everything else in life. And since God's presence is a holy presence, a just presence, a truthful presence, and a presence characterized by *all* of His attributes, we insult the Gospel of the kingdom when we allow *politics* to dictate justice, holiness, goodness, or anything else. Too many Christians fail to see how it is more than just individuals who are alienated from God. The Bible says that all of life is alienated from God, and the Gospel reconciles everything that was alienated back to God. And the more these reconciled-Christians experience His presence, the more it transforms everything they do. Why? Because as Christ reconciles us to God, God's attributes transform the way we think and act in every area of life.

But Christians often think that this is not possible. After all, politics, education, business, and everything else is too far gone. And that's why in this third sermon I decided to look at the omnipotence of God and show that if God's intention is to reconcile the world to God (which He says it is), then since He is omnipotent, *that goal is going to be achieved*. There is nothing that is too difficult for God to do. *And* God is patient. That's one of His attributes. And over the last 2000 years He *has* been advancing the kingdom of Christ. There are more Christians worldwide today than at any other time in human history. God has been omnipotently advancing the kingdom of Christ worldwide.

o) "For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power" (1 Cor. 4:20)

1 Corinthians 4:20 says that "the kingdom of God is not in word [only] but in power." Yet how frequently do we speak and work for the kingdom and yet fail to experience this power? There is a reason, and I want to spend the remainder of this sermon adding a few other tips to the previous sermons on how *we* can experience God's power in abundance.

E. How do we enter more and more into the experience of God's power in our lives?

1. Acknowledge God's power (Is. 33:13 and Scriptures above)

The first sub-point is obvious. Isaiah 33:13 commands us, "you who are near [that's sermon two, right - you who have experienced His presence; "you who are near" -], acknowledge My might." If you do not believe that God's power continues to be exercised daily on our behalf, then you will not have the faith to lay claim to it. What did Christ say when people came to Him for healing? "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" And one man wisely responded. "Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief." It's not enough to believe in God's omnipotence in the abstract. You must be able to believe Christ's words to Paul: "My grace is sufficient for *you*." So by faith we must *acknowledge* that God's power is available right now for our Christian walk.

Many Christian theologies deny that such power is available to us right now, and I suspect that they came up with the power denying theology because they haven't experienced it. So an excellent place to begin to experience the reality of what we are talking about this morning is to prayerfully read the book of Ephesians laying claim to its promises in light of the steps we talked about in the previous two sermons. You will not regret it. So first, acknowledge that God's attribute of power is available to *you*.

2. Admit that you don't have power to change yourself, and humble yourself before God (2 Cor. 12:9,10; 4:7; 1 Pet 5:7; James 4:6,10)

A second important step is that we must admit that we don't have the power to change ourselves and therefore to humble ourselves in the sight of God. This is always a key point in experiencing a relationship with God because God hates all pride and self-sufficiency. One Scripture that says this quite well is 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

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...

Let's stop there for a moment. I want you to notice the little word "that." Paul is saying that the reason he gladly boasts in his infirmities is *so that* the power of Christ might rest upon him. Unless we boast in our weaknesses, we can't know God's power. But that doesn't come naturally, does it? What is our first impulse when someone shows us our weakness? It's to deny our weakness, or perhaps to even get upset. We like to minimize our weaknesses, not boast in them. Our weaknesses embarrass us. But the Bible says that when we admit our weakness and by faith turn to God for *His* strength, *God loves to come through*. Pride keeps us from enjoying God's provision. So continuing to read from that same passage in 2 Corinthians 12, Paul says,

...most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 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.

I shared with you last week that the weakness in my memory that my encephalitis produced in me has enabled me to experience God's power in the last year far more than I have ever experienced His power before that. It has impressed on me as never before how important it is to walk in the Spirit, and not in the flesh.

3. By faith receive the Spirit's transforming power into your own life (Luke 11:9-13; Acts 1:8; 2:38; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:5; Eph. 1:17-21; 2 Tim. 1:7)

Third, we must receive the Spirit's transforming power into our own life by faith. We must believe that we can receive *Him*. We talked about this during the last sermon but let me remind you that Luke 11:9-13 says that God is far more ready to give us the Spirit than a parent is ready to give his children food. He is far more ready to give us the omnipotent Holy Spirit than parents who generously give their children food. Ephesians 1 makes clear that till the end of time the church will need to experience the Holy Spirit's powerful working.

4. Be with God's people in the place of worship (Ps. 63:2; 68:35)

The fourth step for entering into the experience of God's power is to place ourselves into a good church - into a place where God loves to manifest His power. The book of Revelation says that Christ walks in the midst of the golden lampstands, and those golden lampstands were images representing the churches. He indwells the temple which is the church. It is from the threshold of that temple that rivers of living waters flow.

We live in an age when many many Christians think that the church is irrelevant. They minimize the importance of the church (Christ's body) and they maximize the importance of individual ministries. But to whom did Christ make the promise that the gates of hell would not prevail against it? The church. He said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." And when the church once again takes up the mantle and begins to experience God's power in richness, then God's people *individually* will begin to experience it in even greater measure. Psalm 63:2 says, "So I looked for You *in the sanctuary* to see Your power and Your glory." He *sought* God there and he *found* God there. Psalm 68:35 says, "You are awesome, O God, in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives power and strength to His people."

5. Keep right with God on anything the Spirit is convicting you about (Prov. 3:34; James 5:16; 4:1-10; 1 Pet. 5:5).

The next step is to keep right with God on anything that the Holy Spirit is convicting you about. James 5:16 says that it is as we confess our sins that the prayer of faith will heal the sick. Confessing our sins may seem to be irrelevant to healing, but we always give people the opportunity to confess their sins before we anoint them with oil and pray over them because confession of sin is one way of humbling ourselves and connecting us with God's power. James 5:16 says, "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." Which, by the way, shows that it's not only elders who can pray for healing. You can pray for one another.

But in connection with the importance of humility, Proverbs 3:34 says, "Surely He scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble." And actually, James 4:1-10 shows a number of ways in which we find God's power flowing into our lives when we humble ourselves and confess our sins.

6. See "Lord I want to know You" outlines #1,2.

I've been at presbytery all week, so I haven't had a lot of time to prepare for this sermon or perfect it (and especially, I haven't had the time to shorten it), but if you take the applications from the past two sermons and apply them to God's omnipotence, you will see other steps that enable any of us to experience God's power coming through on our behalf more and more. May it be so Lord Jesus. Amen. Let's pray.

Father, I admit that I need your power. I admit that there are things that are just too hard for me. And on behalf of this congregation I ask that your power would be manifested in their lives as well. We believe that nothing is too hard for You. We want to start believing in faith that you will fill us with your power this week and even in this moment. Help us to love the unlovable, to be patient with those who irritate us, to be friendly with those who rub us the wrong way, to find peace in the midst of anxiety-filled situations, to find joy in the midst of affliction, to rise above our circumstances. Please bring your power of healing where healing is needed. We want to know You and the power of Your resurrection life. We are tired of living in the realm of the possible and want to begin laying claim to your promises for the impossible. Thank you that you have already raised us with Christ into the heavenly places and that you have seated us with Him in the heavenlies. May our Christianity from this time forward flow from those heavenly places and transform what we do here on earth. We pray this in the strong name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Receive the Lord's charge and His blessing. Whatever difficulty that you are facing this week, I charge you with Ephesians 6:10 to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, knowing that if God is for you, who can be against you? Amen.