

CLOTHED WITH POWER FROM ON HIGH

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I. INTRODUCTION

- A. As Jesus was about to ascend back into heaven, He gave these final instructions to His apostles:

Luke 24:49: *I am going to send you what My Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been **clothed with power from on high**.*

- B. It is worth noting that even after 3½ years of training with Jesus, the disciples were not equipped to begin their ministry—they needed POWER! They were to “stay in the city UNTIL” they were endued, filled, anointed, and clothed with God’s power. In other words, they couldn’t move or do anything without the power of God.

- C. Even Jesus had to wait 30 years before He began His ministry—He needed to be anointed with the Holy Spirit and power!

1. **Luke 3:21-23:** ²¹*When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as He was praying, heaven was opened ²²and the **Holy Spirit descended on Him** in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are My Son, whom I love; with You I am well pleased.” ²³Now **Jesus Himself was about thirty years old when He began His ministry**. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli...*
2. **Luke 4:16-21:** [After 40 days in the wilderness] ¹⁶*He went to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day He went into the synagogue, as was His custom. And He stood up to read. ¹⁷The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. Unrolling it, He found the place where it is written: ¹⁸“**The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.**” ²⁰Then He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on Him, ²¹and He began by saying to them, “**Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.**”*

- D. Paul recognized the need for God's power in his own ministry:
1. **1 Cor. 2:4-5:** *⁴My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but **with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵SO THAT that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.***
 2. **1 Cor. 4:20:** *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.*
 3. **1 Thess. 1:5:** *Our gospel came to you **not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit...***
- E. We are not sufficient in ourselves—we need to be clothed with power from on high!
1. **2 Cor. 2:14-16** (NKJV): *¹⁴Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. ¹⁵For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And **who is sufficient for these things?***
 2. **2 Cor. 3:5-6** (NKJV): *⁵Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, **not of the letter but of the Spirit;** for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

II. POWER IN JESUS' MINISTRY AND THE EARLY CHURCH

- A. Luke, a physician [see Col. 4:14; Luke 4:23; 5:31; 8:43] and writer of the third gospel and the book of Acts, paid close attention to the power of God in Jesus' ministry; he writes more about the power of God than any other gospel writer.
- B. **Acts 10:38:** *How **God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power,** and how He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him.*
- C. **Luke 4:1, 14, 36:** *¹Jesus, **full of the Holy Spirit,** returned from the Jordan and was **led by the Spirit** in the desert... ¹⁴**Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit,** and news about Him spread through the whole countryside... ³⁶All the people*

*were amazed and said to each other, “What is this teaching? **With authority and power He gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!**”*

- D. **Luke 5:17:** *One day as He was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And **the power of the Lord was present for Him to heal the sick.***
- E. **Luke 6:17-19:** *¹⁷He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of His disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, ¹⁸who had come **to hear Him and to be healed** of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, ¹⁹and **the people all tried to touch Him, because power was coming from Him and healing them all.***
- F. **Luke 8:45-46:** [The woman with bleeding] ⁴⁵“Who touched Me?” Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pressing against You.” ⁴⁶But Jesus said, “Someone touched Me; **I know that power has gone out from Me.**”
- G. **Luke 9:1-2:** *¹When Jesus had called the Twelve together, **He gave them power and authority** to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, ²and He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.*
- H. **Luke 24:49:** *I am going to send you what My Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been **clothed with power from on high.**”*
- I. **Acts 1:8:** *But **you will receive power** 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.*
- J. **Acts 3:6, 12:** [Crippled man healed at the temple] ⁶Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but **what I have I give you.** In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk...” ¹²When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us **as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?**”
 1. What did Peter have to give the crippled man? God’s healing power!
 2. Peter explained that this was God’s power, not their own.

K. **Acts 4:7, 30-31, 33:** ⁷*They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: “By what power or what name did you do this?”* [Prayer in the church after their release from prison] ³⁰***Stretch out Your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus.*** ³¹*After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were **all filled with the Holy Spirit** and spoke the word of God boldly...* ³³***With great power the apostles continued to testify*** to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.

1. The religious leaders wanted to know “by what *power*” Peter and John had healed the crippled man.
2. After their release, Peter and John gathered the church to pray for MORE POWER—healing, signs and wonders!
3. God answered their prayer immediately—“with great power the apostles continued to testify!”
4. Luke gives further details in the next chapter of Acts:

Acts 5:12-16: ¹²***The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people...*** ¹³*No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people.* ¹⁴*Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.* ¹⁵*As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by.* ¹⁶***Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed.***

L. **Acts 6:8:** *Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people.*

III. KNOWING AND BELIEVING IN GOD'S POWER

- A. It is possible to have a religious form, but not know the power of God—this is very common in modern Christianity!
1. **Mat. 22:29:** *Jesus replied [to the Sadducees]: “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.*
 2. **2 Tim. 3:5:** *Having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.*

B. Real faith comes from knowing that God has power:

1. **Rom. 4:18-21:** ¹⁸Against all hope, **Abraham** in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” ¹⁹Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. ²⁰Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, ²¹being **fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised.**
2. **Rom. 15:13, 18-19:** ¹³May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace **as you trust in Him**, so that you may **overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit...** ¹⁸I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done— ¹⁹**by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit.** So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.

C. Paul’s prayers for power:

1. **Eph. 1:15-19** (NKJV): ¹⁵Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in **my prayers:** ¹⁷that 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, ¹⁸the 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, ¹⁹and **what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.**
2. **Eph. 3:7, 16-20:** ⁷I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through **the working of His power...** ¹⁶**I pray** that out of His glorious riches **He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit** in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸**may have power**, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is

*the love of Christ,¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.²⁰ Now to Him who is **able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.***

3. **Eph. 6:10:** *Finally, **be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.***
4. **Col. 1:10-11:** ¹⁰*And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,¹¹ **being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might** so that you may have great endurance and patience...*

D. We live by God's power, not our own

1. **2 Tim. 1:7:** *For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but **a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.***
2. **2 Cor. 4:7:** *But we have **this treasure in jars of clay** to show that **this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.***
3. **2 Cor. 12:9-10:** ⁹*But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for **My power is made perfect in weakness.**” Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, **so that Christ's power may rest on me.**¹⁰ That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*
4. **2 Cor. 13:4:** *For to be sure, He was crucified in weakness, yet **He lives by God's power.** Likewise, we are weak in Him, yet **by God's power we will live with Him to serve you.***
5. **1 Pet. 1:3-5:** ³*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you,⁵ who through faith are **shielded by God's power** until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.*

IV. SUMMARY

- A. Neither Jesus nor the apostles could do anything without the power of the Holy Spirit—they had to wait UNTIL they were clothed with power from on high!
- B. Like Jesus, we need to be anointed with the Holy Spirit AND with power in order to do New Testament ministry. If we want the Kingdom of God, words (preaching, teaching, etc.) are not going to be enough—we need the power of the Holy Spirit manifested in miracles, healings, signs, and wonders.
- C. Our preaching of the gospel MUST be confirmed and followed by miraculous signs:
1. **Mark 16:15-20:** ¹⁵*He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. ¹⁶Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷And **these signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.” ¹⁹After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was taken up into heaven and He sat at the right hand of God. ²⁰Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed His word by the signs that accompanied it.***
 2. **Heb. 2:3-4:** ³*How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was **confirmed** to us by those who heard Him. ⁴**God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will.***
- D. We need to know and believe in the exceeding great power of God; His power must work IN us and THROUGH us—God’s working is ACCORDING to the power at work within us.
- E. We need to pray like the Early Church: “Sovereign Lord, stretch out Your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of Your holy servant Jesus!”
AMEN!