

The Power Wrought in Christ for Peace Eph. 1:19-23

Choral Reading
Ephesians 1:19-23

READER 1: Oh, the utter extravagance of his work in us who trust him—
READER 2: endless energy,
READER 3: boundless strength!
READER 2: All this energy issues from Christ:
READER 3: God raised him from death
ALL READERS: and set him on a throne in deep heaven,
READER 1: in charge of running the universe,
READER 3: everything from galaxies
READER 2: to governments.
READER 1: No name
READER 3: and no power
READERS 2 & 3: are exempt from his rule.
READER 1: And not just for the time being,
ALL READERS: but forever.
READER 2: He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything.
READER 3: At the center of all this,
ALL READERS: Christ rules the church.
READER1: The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church.
ALL READERS: The church is Christ's body,
READER 2: in which he speaks
READER 3: and acts,
READER 1: by which he fills everything with his presence.
ALL READERS: How great is the mighty power of our God!

[19] And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, [20] Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, [21] Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: [22] And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, [23] Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Power may be local, or exotic, malevolent or benevolent, imminent or distant, demanding or indulging, complicated or simple, tractable or intractable.

Constellations of power surround certain needs.

- (a) The need to survive.
- (b) The need to belong.
- (c) The need to love.
- (d) The need to share.
- (e) The need to cooperate.
- (f) The need for freedom.
- g) The need for fun.
- (h) The need for power.

When a person is converted to Jesus Christ, what happens at the level of the "powers"? I am quite convinced that for a sustained conversion experience a person must be filled to the fullness of Jesus Christ who is raised to a position of Lordship in his power constellation and kept there through Christ-honoring living.

What is the exceeding greatness of His power?

The power is incomparably great, a constellation of power words, like every word you have ever heard for power.

How much strength is available for the Christian to do daily living? How much divine energy is really directed toward us?

How great is the might to which we can look for the fulfillment of hope and for the strengthening and perfecting of the church?

The power of God is not a tiny brook - barely meeting demands; to live, evangelize, endure suffering, do God's will, life, budgets, intimacy, love, peace. It is like a surging river, driving before itself all the obstacles it may encounter. It is like a reservoir of love over-flowing.

"It is great! It is awesome!! It is incredible, amazing, stupendous, unbelievable," Pile up words, one on top of the other, in order to try to convey some of the sense of Paul's excitement and enthusiasm.

Paul gets excited and starts to pile up words: "power" and "might" and "strength" and "exerted", feel the building sense of enthusiasm.

Great Power: Du na mis, The ability to accomplish what is begun;

Ephesians 1:19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Dynamite, external: Three acts of history - Creation, Exodus, and Resurrection.

Incredible Power: En er gei a, Brute strength; Internal, inherent, muscle, built in genetic instruction, intrinsic.

Ephesians 1:21

Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

God is my strength and power, and He makes my way perfect. --2 Samuel 22:33

The picture in the newspaper caught my attention. Above the caption "Strong Man" was a photo of a workman displaying what seemed to be superhuman strength. He appeared to be lifting a piano up to a second story apartment porch. An explanation under the picture plus one discernible clue, however, told the unseen story.

By looking closely I could see a cable attached to the piano. The real power to lift it was coming from a crane above, rather than from the man below.

That scene reminded me of the way the Lord works in and through those who trust Him. Looking at our circumstances, we don't see God. Yet He is there up above.

Helping Power: Kra tos, The ability to face and overcome

Ephesians 3:7

Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power

Ephesians 3:10

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God

Ephesians 3:20

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Ephesians 6:12

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Mighty Power: Is chus, The actual use of power; autocratic, measureless, endowed. God's power is seen in;

The resurrection of Jesus, (v.20). What eye opening things there are in store for those who deepen their knowledge of Christ!

How much power was necessary to take Christ, crucified, mutilated, disgraced, dead, and

to raise him in newness of life, radiant, triumphant, glorious, and

place him at the right hand of God on his throne in heaven?

Look at Jesus, where he was - the poor, tortured wounded body, slain by our sins, lying cold and still in Joseph's grave.

Lift your eyes and see Him where He is - enthroned in worship and wonder of heaven!

Measure by that distance, by the sweep and lift of that almighty arm, the strength of the forces engaged to your salvation. Measure the might of powers at work through the ages for the redemptions of humanity! (Findlay, Gray and Adams, p. 226).

The enthronement of Jesus, (vv. 20-21).

Belief in Christ does not eradicate all other powers; rather it places Him above all powers. Most of the world's Christians would score high on a doctrinal questionnaire as to the person of Christ. The test comes however, in times of crisis when they require power or knowledge which they may feel Jesus holds.

The Headship of Christ over the church, (v.22).

Christianity is not bound up with the infallibility of the church, whether in Pope or Councils, it stands or falls with the reality of the facts of the gospel, with the risen life of Christ, and his presence in the Spirit amongst men. (Findlay).

What is it that proves the authenticity of Christ?
He was bodily raised from the dead or your faith is worthless.

He is head of the church or the church has no power.

1. We need to first recognize that this power is for us.

We need to see all Paul is about to say about the power of God as being available to us, purposed for us to live in and to know. We need to constantly keep in mind that the power Paul is describing is for us who believe. Keep that in mind...

2. Power Demonstrated

Jesus exalted.

Think of all Paul had seen and done in his ministry –people healed in miraculous ways, shipwrecked and delivered from the water and from the bite of a poisonous snake, he had cast out demons. Paul raised a man from the dead.

Acts 19:11-12 tells us that while Paul was in Ephesus, “God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.” Does he list all the miracles? No, he talks about Jesus.

Held up against the resurrection of Christ, those pale in comparison. Paul is focused on the exalted Christ. That is the point of the power of God – to exalt Christ and lift Him up and to recognize Jesus as the ruler over all.

3. Power in Action

Power over all spiritual beings

We know that there was a lot of magic practiced at Ephesus, there was a huge temple to a goddess named Diana/Artimus – one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and a lot of spiritual rituals and sorcery and divination. Note that Paul claims Jesus is not only stronger, that He is over them, but that

Jesus is "far above".

Hopefully this is encouraging to you also. We need have no fear, because Jesus, whom we know and love and serve, is far above any other spiritual force. Jesus reigns. Stay focused on Him. Know that He is stronger than any rule, authority, power, dominion, demon, or temptation to sin. Let the power of His love flow through you.

When Jesus Christ truly takes charge of our minds, bringing our every thought captive to Him, we become spiritually invincible. We operate with supernatural power. We walk in God's complete control. [1489] [from Christenson's book, "The Renewed Mind."]

"God placed ALL THINGS under his feet, and appointed him to be head OVER EVERYTHING". Not only the spiritual forces are under Jesus' control, but everything.

Hebrews 2:8-9 (New International Version)

8 and put everything under his feet?[a]In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

Power for the Church.

Christ is head over everything "for the church", Ephesians 1:23 (New International Version) **...which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.** Look at how we are described: "the fullness of him who fills everything in every way."

We, who are the church, are the purpose of Jesus' reign. Jesus reign is for us,

the church. And we, who are the church, are filled with the fullness of Christ.

It is in the church that God has chosen to reveal His power. The church is full with the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way so that we can know God's power. So all divine power/glory found in Christ is also to be found in the church.

Perhaps an analogy will best clarify this. As Christians we may be compared with a reservoir for producing electrical power, like one of those you see when you drive down the canyon. When we accept Christ, construction of our reservoir is complete.

We now have the potential to be useful and to affect lives. But until the flood gates are opened and the cascading river waters pour through, no power is realized.

So it is when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit. We open our lives to God and the Holy Spirit pours into us and through us. It is then we become most effective in God's service.

As with the reservoir, this power-generating experience is not intended to be a one-time occurrence. It is to be an ongoing process.

When our spiritual power runs low, we need to return to the source and let the blessed Holy Spirit pour into us again, bringing fresh power.

This happened to the early followers of Jesus. Peter and John they had already been baptized in the Spirit; but later on, when persecution arose, they needed a new surge of spiritual power; so they prayed to the Lord once again and "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 4:31).

Contributed by: David Schaal

4. Power for Us.

I began by asking us to keep in mind that all this description of the power of God comes out of Paul's prayer **that we would know this "incomparably great power for us** who believe."

We have some misconceptions – some powerful misconceptions – that keep us from knowing the power of God. Scripture clearly teaches that when we are open to God, letting Him be in control and us seeking to be obedient, the result will be the fullest life possible.

Strange –miraculous – "supernatural" , but regardless, it will be full. It will be powerful. Acts 1:8 says we will receive power to be witnesses for Christ.

Paul taught that the result of a spirit-controlled life is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Gal. 5:22). God's power is for us.

What is holding you back from experiencing more of the power of God? What is keeping you from allowing Him to be Lord of your life just like He is of all creation? Why is His power not spilling over?