



April 23, 2021

### **The Power of God**

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from here back in my office on the Gulf Coast. We had a blessed visit to Tennessee and safe travels. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week too has been blessed.

In just a little over three weeks you and I will be celebrating the Feast of Pentecost. It seems every year the 50 days we count goes faster...maybe it is just me.

As a small child, counting 50 days from the Sabbath in the middle of the Days of Unleavened Bread was one of the first things I learned to do from my parents as we searched the scriptures.

On this day of Pentecost, almost 2,000 years ago, the Church of God, which had only about 120 followers, made a historical recorded dramatic change in numbers, influence, and spiritual power. Three thousand people alone were baptized on Pentecost, and in a short time the Church grew to over 5,000. It's an awesome story that I re read every year in preparation for this upcoming Holy Day.

I'll be giving a sermon message this Sabbath entitled the "Power of God". We'll talk in great detail about the awesome power of God through His Spirit.

What is one of the many profound lessons we can learn from this Festival?

On that first Pentecost, God was showing His approval and commitment for the tiny group of followers of Christ by pouring out His power on His disciples. In his sermon on this day, Peter quoted from the prophet Joel, which he ascribed to events of this day: *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, ' says God, 'that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy'"* (Acts 2:17-18).

The Church of God was granted this power to spread the Good News beyond Jerusalem to all the "ends of the earth" (which at that time may have been a bit different than today geographically). The unique outpouring of the Holy Spirit of God made it possible. It inspired people and moved through and around obstacles in the way. The Church started ever so small, and thus grew to a force that could not be stopped. In fact, Christ still reminds us that "the gates of the grave shall not prevail or stop His church". You and I are direct results from that

original message! It was made possible because of the "Power of God".

As a child I often would gaze into the skies, in fact I still do, and reflect on the awesome power that created what I see, and that continues to sustain it. Imagine without God, how would the moon not come crashing to earth? How would the earth not spin off into the distant skies, flinging us all in every direction like batter off a beater from making cookies? So many questions that are easily explained simply by "The Power of God".

One thing that strikes me in this current age we live in, is how so many hypothesize how this or that came into existence. Any credit to God as the being that did so? Hardly. Very few do anymore. Many simply do not believe in God, must less His power.

We need to be reminded that it was only through that working of that power of the Holy Spirit that any increase came. The prophet Joel clearly points that out. It was God's time to fulfill a special purpose for His gospel to make its impact in the world. Both the book of Acts and Paul's epistles give us insight into the growth of the Church in the first century.

We should all be encouraged by those events that took place on the Day of Pentecost and the establishment of God's New Testament Church. Christ's earthly ministry by itself drew a small number of followers. Then, with the coming of God's Holy Spirit the real growth began.

In weekly Sunday evening Bible studies a year or so ago we covered The History and Background of the Gospels...and examined many of these events closely. It was indeed inspiring! I have to wonder how many really understood what God's Spirit is able to do, and did?

The power of the Spirit of God is first mentioned in the second verse of the Bible: *"The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters"* (Genesis 1:2).

It is that same Spirit that came into the Church on Pentecost. It is that same Spirit that comes to us, and lives in us who come to repentance as was preached by the apostle Peter: *"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (Acts 2:38-39). That Spirit gives us power we had not had before to live a transformed life pleasing to God.

If we catch ourselves being incredibly negative, complaining, self-focused, perhaps we might consider is that power truly living in us? Or are we missing it?

I know the "size of the church" is still on many of our minds. As my wife and I traveled within Colombia and other Latin countries over the years it kept coming up in conversation. In traveling throughout the U.S. it was the same. Although we may seem very small today, God is

still very much with His Church. I have to ask for me personally, whether here on the Gulf Coast, Texas, Colombia, or anywhere else in the world...how is it we continue? It is by the power of God's Holy Spirit we prevail. The Body of Christ lives because of the power of His Spirit.

John writes this in his message to Church in Philadelphia: *"These things says He who is holy, He who is true, 'He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens': 'I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie--indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth'"* (Revelation 3:7-10).

In our prayers, let us remind God how thankful we are for Him sharing that Power of His Holy Spirit with us. Galatians 2:20 makes it ever so clear, it must never be about us, but about what God is doing IN us. Meditate on that power, think about what it can and will do, and seek to remove our focus from this world around us and all its consternation.

The Day of Pentecost is a day of great encouragement to us all, as it points to the "Power of God" working in all creation, the Church and in each of our individual and collective lives.

Ask God, to stir up that gift, and set a blazing spiritual fire of enthusiasm, strength, boldness and patience within us to be about doing His will here on the earth.

Arms up friends! Our prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Please do pray for us as well.

**-Scott Hoefker**

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