



May 13, 2022

What Sort of Power is this?

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God, from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you all doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

One of my favorite things to do as a child was to count the number of days up until any given event I was looking forward to. I would sometimes mark them off from my calendar, or simply take note as the anticipation built along the way!

I also remember often thinking “will I ever grow to the point needed to do certain things?” Like so many of us, I would sometimes even reply when asked how old I was, “I am 11 and $\frac{3}{4}$ years old”. Any of you remember doing that?

Well, another of the significant Holy Days of the year is fast approaching, the *Day of Pentecost*. This Sabbath will complete week 4 of the 7 week count. You and I will soon observe and celebrate the incredible and special manifestation of God’s Holy Spirit which was sent on that Pentecost that took place 10 days after Christ’s ascension into the clouds above the earth and then into third heaven.

Each week on Tuesday evenings we have an interactive web fellowship study of God’s Word called *Bible Basics*. During these we frequently discuss bearing fruit as the children of God. We also discuss throughout the year how we are to go about becoming a new creature (or creation) as Paul recorded for us. We discuss often “are we growing spiritually?”.

It’s no secret, that apart from God, and using His Spirit in our lives, we simply won’t grow in grace and knowledge and become that new creation as Christ desires.

So a question we should consider is, what qualities are encouraged, produced, and manifested by the working of and yielding to the indwelling of God’s Spirit?

How will they help us grow and become a new creation?

One of my oft quoted verses is this, as the apostle Paul writes of several of them. "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7) A spirit of power is one of these qualities.

Years ago in my counseling practice, I would discuss with clients, "why are you fearful?" and many times this scripture would be looked at together. We'd then discuss that there is power to help us drive away that fear.

Some would then ask, "What sort of power is this?"

Was it the power and courage to engage at that time in history in the Coliseum as a Gladiator? Perhaps there were some Christians living at that time who may have been forced to participate in battling wild animals, and with God's help courageously prevailed.

Not all the exact details of their lives are recorded. Many Christians have been martyred over the centuries who refused to recant their belief in Jesus Christ, or go along with the teachings and heresies of the persecuting powers of false Christianity. They accepted death rather than deny their Lord and Savior and the true practices and beliefs of their faith.

I have to wonder dear friends, if some of us will face similar circumstances before all is said and done. Oh I don't mean fighting in a literal Coliseum, but we have Coliseums of a different kind existent today. Far too many still teach that we will all miraculously be taken to a "place of safety" and none of us will suffer harm or death. God's Word does not define that.

Even now, some ministers write, "if we just trust God, and obey Him, and focus on protection for 'us' we'll receive it no matter what". That contradicts what Christ desires of us, to being a living sacrifice, and if required give our physical life up to follow Him.

God has always been more concerned with our spiritual protection and our lives are ultimately in His capable hands. I read Hebrews 11 where it clearly says "these

all died in Faith, not yet having received the promises...”

More importantly we know God wants us to be deeply concerned with the spiritual battles we face. One of the greatest enemies you and I battle is “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2) and we absolutely need the power of God’s Spirit to both identify him, his tactics, and to resist him.

In Ephesians 6 it is interesting that our struggle against the devil is compared to that of a gladiator against a foe. We are instructed to take up the whole armor of God and put it on as we enter the battle against this formidable enemy. Since we are to always remain vigilant our armor should be worn at all times.

You and I also need a sound stable mind anchored in the Word of God as we navigate the mine fields of false doctrines and subsequent twisting of the Scriptures. One of the critical pieces of armor mentioned in Ephesians 6 is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (v.17) We should be reminded, that a sword can be used in both a defensive and an offensive way. At times we are to confront the enemies of deception, false accusation, and lawlessness, and then expose and remind others to stay away from them.

When Jesus sent out the apostles on one of their many training missions, “He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out” and then sent them out. (Matthew 10:1) We too are to be vigilant and resist the devil. (1 Peter 5:8-9) His Power is our only chance of survival.

We do that by drawing near to God, the indwelling of His Spirit and resisting the devil. (James 4:7-8)

We who have the Spirit of God must humbly open ourselves to be influenced, guided, and instructed by the very Word of God. We’ve got to be open to being instructed, corrected and warned. *“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* (Hebrews 4:12) We don’t automatically just receive this, we must be diligently searching, reading, and studying His Word in a teachable manner yielding to His Spirit.

We see here again an allusion to a sword as we saw in Ephesians 6. When we correctly respond to God's Spirit we are impelled to examine our thoughts, impulses, intents and motives. When they do not conform to God's word, we are to sincerely repent, change and thus continue to become a new creation. Stubbornly refusing to yield to Him, or coming up with our own ideas, teachings, or perspectives is never in line with His Spirit.

On that first Day of Pentecost this is what happened to those who responded to the Apostle Peter's Spirit inspired preaching. *"Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37) Their response was what is expected of all who are called to repentance as received from the message preached by God's servants. "Then Peter said to them, "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)*

Just like the apostles, God's Spirit was with them and was promised to be in them! (John 14:17)

As we anticipate the upcoming Feast of Pentecost, let's be about examining our own lives to see if we are truly yielding to His Spirit, His truth, growing in grace and knowledge, and becoming a new creation! Are we using that power God supplies? We simply can't grow without His Spirit...but with it, we can indeed become new, yes powerfully new!

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



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