

EQUIPPED WITH POWER

by Dale Rumble

PREFACE

Two attributes, in particular, should distinguish Christians from followers of other religions. These are their righteousness and their power of witness. Furthermore, these attributes should *always* exist together in those who proclaim the gospel. Supernatural signs *alone* do not validate the word of God; righteousness and holiness are also *essential*, to be a witness of Christ.

The gospel of the kingdom is both a *visible* message of God's government and lordship in His ministers, as well as a *proclamation* of deliverance from sin and from the forces that enslave men and women in deception and rebellion against God.

The gospel of the kingdom is more than a logical rationale for righteousness, for it is to be demonstrated as truth; however, this requires the *power* of God (1 Corinthians 2:4). It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, not simply because it is true, but because it is the sword of the Spirit. (Romans 1:16; Ephesians 6:17).

THE SOURCE OF POWER

The Lord Jesus made it very clear concerning the power that rested upon Him for His ministry on earth.

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to bring good news to the afflicted . . . to bind up the broken hearted . . . to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners.” (Isaiah 61:1-2)

Paul also identifies the Holy Spirit as the power that undergirded his ministry.

. . . what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, in the *power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit*; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum, I have *fully* preached the gospel of Christ. (Romans 15: 18-19)

The last words of the Lord Jesus, before He ascended back to His Father, pointed His disciples to the power that they required to become effective witnesses.

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

He exhorted them to wait for the promise from the Father that He had previously instructed them about (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15).

He commanded them to . . . wait for what the Father had promised which He said, you have heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you shall be *baptized with the Holy Spirit* not many days from now. (Acts 1:4-5)

These first disciples obeyed Him, and they received a fullness of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-33). Because of this indwelling power they then bore great witness to the nation of Israel of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

And with *great power* the apostles were giving witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and *great grace* was upon them all. (Acts 4:33)

And the Word of the God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem And Stephen, *full of grace and power* was performing great

wonders and signs among the people. (Acts 6:7-8)

Through the words of Peter, the Lord extended His promise of power to *everyone* who would believe the gospel.

And Peter said to them, “repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you *shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*. For the *promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far away, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself*.” (Acts 2:38-39)

The Lord confirmed His word by sending Philip to the city of Samaria and by bringing Peter to the home of Cornelius, a gentile centurion at Caesarea.

And Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. And the multitude with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they *heard and saw* the signs which he was performing. — When they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they *might receive the Holy Spirit*. For He had not fallen upon any of them; for they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they began laying their hands on them, and *they were receiving the Holy Spirit*. (Acts 8:5, 6, 12, 14-17)

While Peter was still speaking these words (to Cornelius and his party of Gentiles) the Holy Spirit fell upon all these who were listening to the message. And all the circumcised believers

who had come with Peter were amazed, because the *gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also*. For they heard them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, ‘surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?’. And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ(Acts 10:44-48)

We are no different than these early believers; the *only* source of power for us to become more like Jesus and do the works of God is the *blessed Holy Spirit* (Ephesians 3:16, 20). And He will come and indwell *all* who hunger for righteousness, who see their need for power and who will ask for Him in faith.

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father *give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?* (Luke 11:13)

He is to be sought as a **Person**, not as an experience! I learned this truth when I was baptized in the Spirit. As a new believer, I remember how zealous, well meaning believers kept exhorting me over a ten month period to “do this” and “try that” in order to have me speak in tongues. “This is the experience you need,” I was assured. In frustration, I made a “covenant” with the Lord; I would fast for three days and then at a scheduled conference, hands would be laid upon me by visiting ministries, and I would be baptized in the Spirit. There was faith in my heart when I went to the conference. At the appropriate time, I answered an altar call and one of the speakers laid his hands on my head. Immediately, I felt, what I can only describe as liquid fire or electricity, start at the tips of my fingers on both hands and move down my arms and into my stomach. It seemed to build up into a ball, and then began to come up into my throat and my mouth. I was startled to hear someone weeping as if their heart would break. At first, I wondered who it

was. Then I realized that the weeping was coming out of me, even though I was emotionally unmoved. I found myself unable to stand up; I was drunk in the Spirit! It became very clear to me, I had not received an experience, I had received a **Person!** *Someone* had come into my being in a fullness I had never before known. The power of this Person was at work within me! By nature I am reserved, and do not exhibit emotions easily. Now I understood how the Spirit is more than supernatural utterance; He comes to sanctify and empower our whole being, body, soul and spirit.

RELEASING SPIRITUAL POWER

The Greek word for power is “DUNAMIS” from which the English word “dynamite” is derived. However, the explosive nature of dynamite is not representative of spiritual power, for the latter is released in diverse and distinct manners. For example, it is manifest in godly character, by boldness in witnessing, it can be released as one of nine spiritual gifts, or as one of the five fold ministry graces listed in Ephesians 4:11, and it is the unction for prayer in the Spirit, so important to every believer (1 Corinthians 14:14-15; Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20).

The variety in spiritual gifts cover a diverse range of operations of the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ (Romans 12:3-16; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11). Three gifts operate in the realm of a believer’s mind: the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge and the discerning of spirits. The word of wisdom takes place when the Holy Spirit deposits in a believer’s mind a tiny portion of God’s infinite wisdom to address some specific need. It has nothing to do with that person’s natural wisdom. The following examples are found in scripture: Matthew 21:23-27; Luke 20:21-25; John 8:3-7; Acts 23:6-10. The word of knowledge occurs when the Spirit drops into a believer’s mind specific knowledge concerning a circumstance, an individual, or some event (past, present or future). Again, it

is not related to that persons natural knowledge. The following are some examples from scripture: Matthew 17:27; 21:2; John 4:17-18; Acts 5:1-9; 20:29-30; 27:10, 31. The discerning of spirits is *not* the gift of discernment; it is a God given capability to discern the presence, and often the name, of evil spirits (Acts 16:16-18).

Three other spiritual gifts concern the faculty of speech; the gift of prophecy, the gift of tongues (languages), and the gift of interpretation of tongues. These gifts are explained in the following verses of scripture, 1 Corinthians 14:1-33. The gift of prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:3) should *not* be confused with the ministry of a prophet. The message content of the latter is more substantive in content, one that can involve personal direction and apply to the future.

The remaining three gifts of the Spirit are sometimes referred to as “power” gifts; however, they are no more supernatural than the others. These are the gift of faith (i.e. Acts 3:16; 28:3-6), the gifts of healing (i.e. Acts 8:7; 28:8-9), and the gift of working miracles (i.e. Acts 9:36-41; 20:9-10).

One should not hesitate to move in a spiritual gift for fear of making a mistake. Practice and making mistakes are the *only* way to learn. What is needed is a correct learning environment; this is why home church meetings are so important in developing body ministry.

In most ministries of the Holy Spirit more than one gift is usually involved. For example, the word of knowledge (or the discerning of spirits) with the gifts of healing when praying for the sick to recognize the absence or presence of a spirit of infirmity.

It is profitable to study our Lord’s ministry in the gospels and identify these various gifts of the Spirit when they occur. We must be familiar with them for they are essential “tools of our trade”; weapons for the army of the Lord. No one individual will possess all gifts, for the Lord distributes them so as to build bonds of dependency and

care between members (1 Corinthians 12:11-26). The centrality of Christ is more perfectly displayed when *all* members contribute in ministry. The body of Christ is not designed to promote clergy/laity or performer/spectator roles. It is to express the Person and the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As each one has received a special gift, employ it in *serv*ing one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, let him speak as it were, the utterances of God (i.e. not a personal opinion), whoever serves, let him do so as *by the strength which God supplies*; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ . . . (1 Peter 4:10-11)

The primary purpose of spiritual gifts is not simply meeting spiritual needs, but to *glorify* the Lord in the ministry process. He must *always* be central in our service. When this emphasis is lost, the ministry focus becomes need oriented, and the Lord's anointing is slowly replaced by greater human efforts to do the work of God. Such self confidence is a deception that leads to powerlessness!

Spiritual gifts serve to establish their recipients in their unique place of service in the local body.

For I (Paul) long to see you in order that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, *that you may be established*. (Romans 1:11)

This is the reason why impartation of gifts and ministries often involves the laying on of hands and prophecy. Both the candidate and the entire body will recognize the call and gifting being identified (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6). This creates in the assembly an environment of faith for the individual to move with confidence and thereby become quickly established in his ministry.

GROWING IN POWER

In whatever ministry one has been called to serve, the grace and power to do so will increase as that person grows and matures in the Spirit. Such increase is largely a function of three spiritual principles.

1. *Faithful obedience* to the ministry God has designated, and doing so *within the sphere* He has apportioned.

2. All ministry is based on the *grace* of God (2 Timothy 1:9). When there is an abundance of good fruit from a ministry and the person remains *humble*, the Lord will extend the grace and sphere of his ministry, for grace is dispensed on the basis of *humility* (James 4:6,10).

3. The more intimately one knows the Lord, the greater will be the recognition of how *limited* and *weak we are in our humanity* and how impossible it is for us to ever do the work of God. This understanding allows God to complete and perfect His power within such a person.

And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for (My) power is perfected in weakness . . .” (2 Corinthians 12:9)

The Everlasting God, the Lord . . . gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. —those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength . . .” (Isaiah 40:28-31)

. . . not by might or by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts. (Zechariah 4:6)

To some, the only credible evidence of a Spirit filled life is demonstration of the three power gifts of the Holy Spirit. However, in his epistle to Ephesus, Paul specifically identifies four marks of a Spirit filled life (Ephesians 5:18-21).

1. “*Speaking to one another* in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs”; (i.e. *prophetic worship and ministry in the body*).

2. “*Singing and making melody* with your heart to the Lord”; (i.e. personal worship and ministry to the Lord).

3. “*Always giving thanks for all things* in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father”; (i.e. a heart of thankfulness, and especially giving thanks for *all* circumstances, pleasant or otherwise, knowing that God has allowed them into our life, and He will cause them to work together for good if we embrace them accordingly).

4. “*Be subject to one another* in the fear of Christ”, (i.e. be knit together in submission and unity with others in the church, recognizing that each one has been placed and is sustained by the same Holy Spirit as we are. Because of Him, we are members of one another. The fear of Christ keeps one from a fear of man.

These four practices are not intended to produce a “super-minister”, but to make *each* member of a local body *strong in the Lord*.

The muscles of one who does not exercise will become weak and flabby. The same principle holds true in the realm of spiritual power. We are not called to first develop great stature in power and strength, so that we can overcome Satan; *we will develop strength and power as we overcome the evil one and his works*. The **first** step in this process is to destroy wrong *thought* patterns and bad *habit* patterns in our lives that can become footholds and fortresses for demonic influence. We *cannot be effective against* Satan if we allow him to have any *area* of control in our life! This is particularly true in the realm of our minds (Romans 12:2).

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction

of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:4-5)

Often the difficulties, circumstances and oppositions we face have been brought into our life so that we will recognize and deal with some personal weakness. This is why the Lord allowed Judas to carry the purse; so that he would see his need as a thief and repent. The very hindrances to their service that believers confront, are many times simply opportunities brought by God to strengthen them redemptively. Strong winds develop deep roots. Some of the winds that produced such strength in Paul are listed in his epistle to Corinth: "much endurance, afflictions, hardships, distresses, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, sleeplessness, hunger and evil report" (2 Corinthians 6:4-10). Can ministries be raised up in the church for the last days apart from such "winds"? I think not.

THE POWER TO COME

As the church enters the decade of the nineties, she will begin to experience the power of God that eventually closes this age with the Lord's return. It will be a time of *great grace*; grace for repentance and cleansing in the house of God, grace for power evangelism and spiritual warfare, grace for the gospel of the kingdom to be preached as a witness to all nations resulting in great multitudes being saved, and grace for holiness and glory to rest upon the church (Isaiah 60:1-5). It will be a final, great manifestation of God's love and grace before His judgment falls on the earth. Governments are being quickly changed and new leaders put into place to prepare the nations for these things.

However, not only nations, but the church also must undergo change in preparation for the power to come. It will be a time when the Lord judges all those

who profess His name. *Everyone* will be tested. The Lord will use the great web of deception Satan is preparing in the New Age Movement for this purpose.

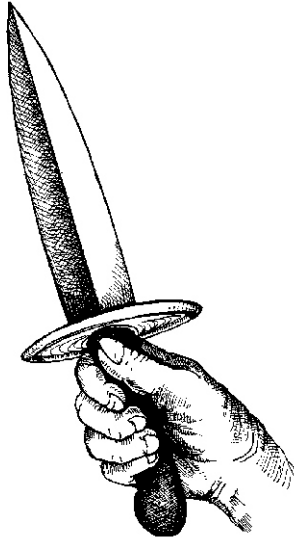
The Lord has made everything for its (His) own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil. (Proverbs 16:4)

Those whose hearts are not truly given to Him will fall away; the tares will be gathered out from the good grain (Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43; 24:4-14, 21-24; 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10; Revelation 13:8). On the other hand, many of the poor, the oppressed, those in bondage to drugs and false ideologies (especially in third world nations) will be swept into the kingdom by a mighty wave of power evangelism (Joel 2:28-32; 3:14). There will be great need for endurance as persecution, lawlessness and deception increases. However, there will be *no lack of God's power* for those in His army who leave their cloisters and go out to seek and save the lost. Great unity will mark those engaged in this task. Their message will make the gospel of the kingdom relevant to the great issues and sins in society. It is time for the eleventh hour laborers to be sent forth (Matthew 20:6-16)!

In all of this, God *will not* compromise His holiness and character for the sake of ministry. Unto whom much is given, much will be required. The Lord will no longer tolerate hypocrisy or the practice of sin in the church. He is committed to destroy the pride of man and works of the flesh in the church. That which the hand of man has fashioned in the fabric of traditional religious bodies will be shaken as He restores the church and prepares her for His return (Acts 3:19-21). There will be a return of Biblical church government as a new generation of bond-servant leaders are raised up. Total commitment to the Lord and His purpose will be required by His people as He brings them forth separate and distinct from the world, displaying His glory upon them. There will be new dimensions of worship, intercession and ministry graces. Prophets and apostles will minister under an anointing

beyond any ever seen before in the church. There will be great manifestations of power against demon forces, especially against authorities over cities and nations, and the manipulative, controlling spirit of Jezebel in individuals. ***It will be the greatest ever visitation of the Holy Spirit upon the church!***

This age began with a great display of the power of God, and it will close with the greatest and most glorious demonstration of His power and Person ever seen by man. More than at any other time in history, the church needs the power of God. A great privilege is extended to us today; however, to fill the place He has called us to in His kingdom, ***we must be equipped with power!***



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