

Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Tree of Life

April 23, 2000

Easter Sunday

The Power behind our Lord's Resurrection

We have been studying understanding and utilizing the power behind our Lord's resurrection. Today, there is an over emphasis on success. Everything has to work out right; we have to have a better year this year than last year. Even our ministries seem to be successful by numbers. But as Isa 55:8 says, God's ways are not our ways; His thoughts are not our thoughts.

John the Baptist for example, had these characteristics in his ministry:

- 1. He didn't go where the people were; He made them come to him.**
- 2. He deliberately wore clothing that was non-clergy. 3.He spoke offensively, insulted and assaulted his listeners.**
- 4. He embarrassed top-ranking government officials by revealing their hypocrisy.**
- 5. He told his listeners genuinely not worthy of their respect, that there was another who they should follow.**

John the Baptist was the forerunner of the Messiah, and among other things, these were five characteristics of his ministry. He broke every rule for what we would call a successful ministry. He fulfilled his personal sense of destiny and wound up in prison having his head in MAT 14:11 brought on a platter and given to a girl. He did so by operating in the power of God. Our Lord's opinion of John was not that he was strange, ineffective and inappropriate!

In Mat 11:11 the Lord Jesus Christ (TLJC) says something about John the Baptist that He said of no one else in His entire ministry. "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist;"

In our Lord's opinion there was no one who He would compare in character and integrity, in effectiveness, in uniqueness, a man who deliberately refused the glory.

This forerunner's message was the strongest you can read in the New Testament concerning repentance.

He came to clear the way for the Messiah.

He came to prepare the way.

He came to get out of the way.

He operated in the power of God in thoughts and ways totally opposite of the world's way of doing things.

When some said that he was the promised Messiah, he said unequivocally "I am not, I am a lamp, He is the light, I am a voice, He is the word, I am a man, He is Messiah, follow Him."

When some were tempted to follow John, he said, "Behold, He is the lamb, I am only a man". When a few were envious of his authority, John made an incredible statement. Joh 3:30 "He must increase, but I must decrease."

He knew nothing of self-promotion and pushy pride. God used this strange prophet to prepare the way for His Son. John's ministry barely lasted a year and a half. A preacher of the Gospel, he spoke of the Messiah who was yet to come, who was to die for the sins of the world. This is a significant message about John the Baptist, and four lessons stand out that are very important.

1. Those who operate in the power of God and make an impact must not fear being different.

2. Those who wish to change should not ignore being specific. As adult Christians, it takes the Lord a longer period time when we are general with Him, so we must be specific. Declare the specific area in which you

wish to change in and ask God's power and strength and forgiveness, ask for help if others can help you, but get specific.

3. Those who risk confronting dare not forget the consequences. John the Baptist confronted, and ended up in jail. There are other men down through the centuries that have done the same and have suffered the consequences.

4. Those who seek the Savior cannot deny the evidence. This is God's beloved Son in whom He is well pleased.

The knowledge of the power behind our Lord's resurrection is needed in the Church-age because one of Satan's greatest tools is his strategy regarding the Cross. Satan's strategy is the doctrinal attack on the Cross and principle of Salvation by faith alone in Christ alone, 2Co 4:4. This attack is accomplished by adding various types of works to salvation, such as making Christ Lord of your life, walking an isle or raising your hand, or by inviting Christ into your heart or into your life. Satan must obscure the fact that salvation is by faith alone. Because of our Lord's victory on the Cross which overflows into the Church-age, which is the body of Christ and ruled by our Lord Jesus Christ, has received the delegated divine power to resist the devil, as per 1Jo 4:4 "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. "

The Church-age is the most intensive time of the angelic conflict; therefore, the greatest delegation of divine power in human history occurs between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the Church. It is the omnipotence of God given to execute the Pre-Designed Plan Of God. Divine omnipotence is related to both God's promises and God's actions on our behalf, both of which we call grace. But you will never use this power unless you learn Bible doctrine and then do what a lot of believers don't do, apply it.

Paul's application of understanding and utilizing the power behind our Lord's resurrection is given in 2Co 4:6-7 "For God [the Holy Spirit], Who said [Gen 1:3], Light shall shine out of darkness, is the One who made His light to shine in our right lobes to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ [this is the perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine].

God the Holy Spirit making light shine in our hearts is a reference to divine power in action. We would not even be able to understand the knowledge of the glory of God if it were not for the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. Your human spirit is your treasury and the place where good and precious things are collected and stored up and a place filled with the valuables of divine power. The delegation of the omnipotence of God to the Church-age began with the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ at the end of the dispensation of the hypostatic union. This divine power was not made available until He raised TLJC from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in heavenly places. The surpassing greatness of His power is the spiritual life or the Christian way of life. Having your priorities straight and being accurate and precise with doctrine is how you put into action the procedures and the mechanics of this power behind our Lord's resurrection. Like everything else, God has a system for utilization of divine power. His system is found in the PPOG for your life.

After our Lord's victory on the Cross, Satan and the fallen angels raised their attack on the human race. And this is because of what Col 2:15 tells us "when [at the cross] He [God the Father] had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He [God the Father] made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him [God the Son]."

Never before in all of human history has God delegated and made available so much divine power to the believer as in the Church-age. Every believer has the availability of this power, but it remains potential until you fulfill the principle of perception, metabolization and application of Bible doctrine.

However, availability does not imply utilization of that divine power. Between availability and utilization of the mystery doctrine of the Church Age is perception, metabolization, and application. The invisible hero or spiritual champion of the Church-age is manufactured out of divine power.

After the Rapture of the Church in the Tribulation and the Millennium, there will not be a PPOG, as we know it, this is only found in the Church-age. We need to study and master this subject of divine power because:

1. This Divine power brings glory to God, while human power brings glory to man.

2. Bible doctrine metabolized is the means of receiving this divine power, Pro 8:14 "Counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, power is mine." Satan's goal is not to get us to sin, but rather to get us to produce human good or creature credit and blind us to the power of God.

3. Satan, as the god of this world, has designed the world system to wear us down. This is to draw any life, motivation or momentum out of any believer who has positive volition toward doctrine. Therefore we recall 2Co 12:9 "And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."

4. We are to be witnesses or ambassadors for Christ. Willing to give your life for that which you claim to believe.

5. Divine power gives the believer confidence or spiritual self-esteem. Rom 15:13 "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace by means of believing,"

Here is a test which you can take which reveals whether or not you have been using the power of God to grow spiritually: Do you now, right now, have any kind of real confidence in the Lord? Rom 15:13 "that you may abound in confidence by the power of the Holy Spirit."

6. Your faith is not in a man's wisdom but in the wisdom of God. Iconoclastic arrogance is a major reason for believers not continuing in the PPOG.

7. We need to receive nourishment and strength in the new man or the new creature. As new creatures in TLJC we need the appropriate food and nourishment to survive. God's power must be at work within us.

8. We must persevere in life with the happiness of God.

Col 1:11 "Strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously."

9. Divine power overcomes fear in life.

10. We must be able to identify religion, legalism and moral degeneracy. Religion, legalism and moral degeneracy all deny the power of God.

On this Easter Sunday we see the importance of this subject of Christ's resurrection. For if there is no resurrection of the dead, everything begins to tumble like dominoes. 1Co 15:13 "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised;"

If Christ has not been raised, than preaching is a vain and an empty experience, 1Co 15:14.

So if there is no resurrection, He did not raise from the dead. In 1Co 15:16-17 "For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins."

If Christ has not been raised than your faith is worthless and you are still in your sins! That's a troublesome thought.

Do you know what that means? Listen to the word, it has an ugly ring to it. It means we are unforgiven. What would life would be like is there was no resurrection? A life lived without the hope of the resurrection is a life lived without hope. It's the worst kind of existence. Without resurrection, life is as pointless, and meaningless, and empty, and torturous as you can imagine. Once you got to the grave, that's it, it's all over.

You would have no hope whatsoever! However, thank God for 1Pe 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,"

Has there ever been a time when you have specifically told the Lord: "I'm a sinner, I'm lost, I can't correct my way, I've tried and I've failed and today I turn over my life to You by faith, I repent, I change my mind toward You, and I change my desire for those other things. I give myself to You dear Lord."

If there has never been such a time, do that now.

In this sacred and significant moment, Our Father we place ourselves at that vulnerable and most important place we can, and that is at your mercy.

Hear the cries of our prayers of faith.

Understand they come from weak lips, with an even weaker heart, many come today having made a royal mess of their lives, but you are full of grace and you turn no one away.

Give some the courage to come who might otherwise be thought of as religious people and church men and women well known in the community, break down the pride and bring us, our Father to a place of open admission of wrong, and find our repentance bearing fruit of good works.

Thank You for Your work of grace,

And may the penetrating power of the Holy Spirit do a magnificent piece of work, as a result of the truth we have learned. We pray that you would raise up men like unto John the Baptist in this day of wickedness, greed, compromise and lust.

May there be models of truth who give us points upon which we can bear our reference in a world that has lost it's way.

We pray for Jesus sake and in His dear name, Amen.

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