

Daily Devotional Guide

Monday – Today, read Luke 24:44-49 and Acts 1:1-11. In these texts Jesus promises his disciples that they will receive power from on high. Have you ever thought about this power? It is available to everyone who gives their lives to Jesus Christ. This power is the Holy Spirit who enables us to do amazing things for God. This week we will explore this power that is available to us. Today, in prayer, reflect on whether or not you feel you live your life empowered by God.

Tuesday – Read Ephesians 3:20-21. Wow! What a powerful text. Holy Spirit power lives within us and is able to do more through us than we can ever imagine. The Holy Spirit is always guiding and empowering us to do amazing things for God. Unfortunately, we have a tendency to get in the way. Often times we get distracted or worn down by life. Sometimes we are simply afraid of where this power may lead us. However, we will never be disappointed with what the Holy Spirit does through us. We simply need to yield to the power. What amazing thing is the Holy Spirit guiding you to do?

Wednesday – Read Ephesians 6:10-13. One of the ways the Holy Spirit gives us power is by strengthen us against temptation and the forces of evil. A key way to find this strength is to spend time with God in prayer every day. Just 10 minutes a day with God will work wonders. Find a quiet place and a passage of scripture. Pray to God and then simply listen and allow God to empower you through the Holy Spirit. In order to receive power we must be plugged in to the power source!

Thursday – Read 2nd Timothy 1:6-7 and 2nd Peter 1:3. These two texts remind us that we do not have to be victims of life and its draining pace. God has given us a spirit of power that provides for us all we need to live life. Quite often we lack energy and do not feel empowered because the pace of our personality and the pace of God do not match. There is a sacred rhythm to God's movement in our lives and we must allow ourselves to find that rhythm. God will not compete with the frenetic pace of our culture. We must slow down and find harmony in God's rhythm. This is where power lives.

Friday – Read Isaiah 40:28-31. This glorious text reminds us of two important things: we cannot manufacture God's power and we must trust God to give us power. Do you expect God to empower your life? Our expectation is key to receiving power. Expectation is what God gives God permission to turn on the power. God will not force his power on us any more than God will force his will on us. We must expect it and then receive it. What do you expect God to do through you today?



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~ Fully Charged! ~ In the Event of Power Failure

Sunday, February 6, 2011

Sermon by: Dr. Charley Reeb, Senior Pastor

Scripture Lesson: Isaiah 40: 28-31

About a month ago Brandy and I decided to go out for a cultural evening. We wanted to broaden our horizons. So, we headed to Tampa and enjoyed the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus! I just love the circus. I always have. There is nothing better than the combination of clowns, elephants, tigers, snow cones and dare devils willing to risk their lives up in the air. Indeed, it is “the greatest show on earth.”

We all know that the real star of the show of any circus is the tiger tamer. And this was certainly the case the night we were at the circus. The tiger tamer came out just after intermission. Following him were many cages filled with ferocious tigers. They were magnificent creatures. Their big fangs glistened in the spotlight and their huge paws swatted at the tamer. Just before they opened the cages and led the tigers into the enclosed stage, I noticed the tiger tamer kneel down and do the sign of the cross. He knew he was about to face these fierce creatures and wanted to be prepared. Can you blame him?

Seeing the tiger tamer that night reminded me of a true story about another tiger tamer. Several years ago, there was a traveling circus up north that came into a particular town. The tiger tamer came out and was quite the showman. The crowd cheered as he put the tigers through their paces, cracking the whip. Well, about a mile away a car hit a power line and all the lights in the arena went out! The crowd was terrified because they knew this tamer was in this enclosed stage with these tigers in the dark. The tamer was a clever

man. He knew, of course, that tigers could see him real well because tigers have great night vision. However, the tamer was smart enough to know that the tigers did not know that the tamer could not see them! So, what did he do? He just kept cracking the whip and doing his normal routine until the lights came back on. The tigers didn't know the difference.

What do you when the lights go out in your life? What do you do when things go dark? How do you react when the tigers of life surround you? What do you do when the pressures and fears of life take away your energy and courage? Do you feel powerless?

I have good news for you today. You don't have to be powerless. You can live your life with confidence. You can live your life with power, God's power! As Isaiah proclaims, you can “run and not be weary, walk and not faint!” God has promised power to those who love him. I love what 2nd Peter 1:3 says, “His divine power has given us everything needed for life.”

So, what is this power that God promises us? It is Holy Spirit power. In Acts 1:8, Jesus appears to his followers after his resurrection and he tells them, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses...” And so it came to pass on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit moved like a tidal wave among Jesus' followers and the church was born. The early church did amazing acts in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The same amazing power that penetrated the church at Pentecost is available to all of us. All we have to do is give our lives to Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit will move in our lives as well. It will guide us, convict us, encourage us, inspire us and empower us for ministry. Ephesians 6:10 says it well: “Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power.”

Perhaps you want this power in your life, but you don't know how to get it. Maybe the faith is new to you and you never knew you could receive power for living. Perhaps you have been in church all your life, but you have never lived life with power. Well, this morning, I am going to share with you how you can get fully charged and live life with God's power.

Expect the Power

I love the old story about the crowd that went to the hilltop to pray for rain. Their crops and cattle had died. Their land had dried up and they were desperate and discouraged. On their way up the mountain, they ran into this lady who had on a rain hat, rain boots, a rain jacket, and she was holding an umbrella. She looked silly and so a man said to her, “What are you wearing that stuff for? Don't you know it hasn't rained in weeks?” She replied, “What are you coming up here for anyway? If I ask God for rain, I expect a downpour!”

The key to manifesting the power of God in your life is to expect something to happen. Many people feel powerless because they have low expectations. You can see and hear it in their attitudes. You ask them how they are doing and they say, “Well, same old, same old....” Then they wonder why they don't experience powerful things in their life. God will not force his power on us anymore than God will force his love or will on us. Therefore, God's power often remains stuck under a dark, thick cloud of low expectations. In order to experience God's power, you must give God permission to work. And the way you give God permission to work is through your expectations.

Try waking up every day and saying to God, “I expect your power in my life today and I know I will receive it.” Try coming to worship on Sunday saying to God, “God, I expect you to speak to me today.” Try going to work with the attitude,

“Lord, I expect you to use me to help somebody today.” Expect God's power and receive God's power!

Plug Into the Power

Several years ago, the Tournament of Roses parade was on television on New Year's Day. I watched as the commentators described all the beautiful floats. Suddenly, in the middle of the parade, a float sputtered and quit. It had run out of gas. The whole parade was held up until someone could get a can of gas and get it started again. The funny thing was the float represented the Standard Oil Company! With all of its oil resources, it had still run out of gas!

We laugh at this incident, but the truth is this is a parable for many in the church today. There are many Christians who love God, come to worship, go to the Bible studies and still feel powerless. They go through life on fumes. They have this deep reservoir of spiritual power at their disposal and they simply will not use it.

Does this describe you today? Do you feel like you are sputtering through life? Do you feel like you are running your life on fumes? Is your only source of energy a cup of coffee in the morning and it wears out by noon? It could be that you are neglecting the power of God that is within you.

Quite often people will come into my office feeling burned out. They drag in and wonder why they feel so exhausted. Typically, I ask them, “When was the last time you spent 10 minutes alone with God?” Most often they reply, “I can't remember the last time.” Then they wonder why they don't have any power. In order to receive power, we must be plugged into the power source.

The Celtic Christians used to speak of this time of plugging into the power as the “Thin Place.” In other words, we must find the time and place of prayer where the wall between us and God is so thin that we are able to penetrate it and receive the power we need.

Wait for the Power

Wait is a dirty word for us. We don't like to wait for anything. We have fast food, fast internet, fast cars, and fast service. No wonder we don't like to wait! And fast maybe good for business, but it is terrible for our souls. Many of us

short circuit God by the pace of our lives. Many of us are going ninety to nothing to nowhere. Many of us are running ourselves into the ground. Busyness is a counterfeit virtue that can destroy our lives.

God has created us with all the energy we will ever need. But the key is that we must go at God's pace. This is what Isaiah means when he says, “Wait for the Lord.” This phrase means that we must synchronize the pace of our lives with the pace of God. This is where power is found. You see, there is a rhythm to God and the way God moves in our lives. That rhythm is in you through the power of the Holy Spirit. But if you are going at one pace and God is going at another you are simply spinning your wheels, wasting energy instead of receiving it.

So, how do we find God's pace? We do it by doing something that is essential to our spiritual well being – spend time with God in sacred silence. Just five minutes of silence with God can work wonders. Henri Nouwen once said, “Without silence, the Spirit will die in us and the creative energy of our lives will leave us alone, cold, and tired....”

Use the Power

Some time ago there was a study done on burn-out. They interviewed clergy, business executives, and plumbers, all who had experienced burn-out. You know what they discovered in this study? Overwork does not cause burnout. Over functioning is what causes burn out. Over functioning is living your life with no emotional boundaries. Over functioning is worrying and fretting over things that are either out of your control or should not be in your life.

However, the study concluded that working can actually give energy, not take it away. It is true. Using power for a great purpose can bring even more power into our lives.

In this way our souls are like batteries. We all know that many batteries must be used up before we charge them. If we charge a battery without using all of the power in it, we will get a “false charge.” A false charge is when the battery is not charged to its full capacity. I know many Christians who live their lives with a false charge. They come to worship, read the Bible, go to small groups and receive a great charge. But then they

never go out and USE the power they have received to serve others. They never go out and use the power for ministry. Then they come back to church and wonder why they don't feel the power. The best way to get fully charged is to use your charge to the fullest in ministry. Then you will come back to worship for an active charge. If you don't use it, you will lose it.

There is an old story about Abbot Joseph, who was a desert monk who lived in the 4th century AD. He was in charge of a group of monks. He was very wise and would give his monks spiritual advice and encouragement. One day a young monk approached Father Joseph. He was very discouraged. He said, “Father Joseph, I pray every day. I fast regularly. I read the Bible on a consistent basis. I meditate on the scriptures all day. I have done everything I have been told and I still feel powerless. What more should I do?” Father Joseph rose up in reply and lifted his hands toward heaven. His fingers became like ten lamps of fire. Father Joseph looked down at the young monk and said, “Why not be totally changed into fire?”

I dare you to be totally changed into fire. I dare you to expect God's power. I dare you to plug into the power. I dare you to wait for God's power. I dare you to use God's power. I dare you to be fully charged. Amen.