

His Mighty Strength
His Mighty Strength Series
Sermon 1 of 4

The *What* of the Resurrection

(Optional Opening Joke)

A man took his wife and mother-in-law on a trip to the Holy Land. Unfortunately, while there, the mother-in-law passed away.

The funeral director tells the man that he has two options: 1. He can ship her body back to the United States to bury her for \$5,000. 2. He can have her body buried in the beautiful Holy Land for only \$500.

After thinking about it for a moment, the man responded, “Let’s ship her body back to the United States.” The funeral director couldn’t believe it. “So why,” he said, “do you want to send her body back to the United States for \$5,000 when you can have her buried here, in Jerusalem, for just \$500.”

The guy quickly replied, “I heard that 2,000 years ago there was a man who died here and was buried and three days later rose from the dead...I just can’t take that chance.”

That is so wrong on so many levels. First, I love my mother-in-law – raise your hand if you’re with me. Second, the guy gets *what* happened to Jesus – he died and three days later rose again from the dead...

The What – Jesus died and rose again on the third day

...but I don’t think he knows *why* it happened.

The *Why* of the Resurrection

You see, the resurrection is the single greatest and single important event in human history.

- Every year an estimated 2.2 billion people around the world celebrate it in churches from great cathedrals to underground churches.
- Why? – Jesus’ resurrection conquered death once and for all.

The Why – Jesus’ resurrection conquered death once and for all

- When we place our faith in Jesus, we too will cheat death’s eternal victory over us.

That's "why" this is such a bigger deal. Can you think of anything bigger? I can't.

The *How* of the Resurrection

So many people know the *what* of the resurrection and some know the *why* of the resurrection, but I dare say not many at all are quite sure *how* he pulled it off.

- To be honest I wasn't all that clear myself.
- The answer to the *How* question is way more important than you think.
- The *How* begins with a *Who*.
- Look at 1 Peter 3:18 –

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. (1 Peter 3:18)

- News Flash: Jesus did not raise himself from the dead – The Holy Spirit did.

The *How* – The Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead

- Romans 8:11 and Ephesians 1:18-20 confirms the same message.
 - I just always assumed because Jesus is God, and he most certainly is, that he just raised himself from the dead – didn't you? But the Bible clearly says it was the Holy Spirit who did it.
 - Why didn't Jesus just do this himself?

Jesus Emptied Himself

I believe the clue is found in Philippians 2 and Jesus' arrival to our earth as a baby.

- But before we dive into this ancient passage, actually a hymn, let me tell you a personal story that will help us grasp what Paul, the author of the letter, is going to unveil for us today about Jesus.
- (You can certainly make this your own)

Not too long ago my wife and I made dinner plans with good friends we had not seen in a long time. Because this was such a special occasion, we made reservations at a restaurant that was fancy – and expensive – at least by our standards. We were so excited to reconnect with our good friends, to retell old stories, to catch up on the latest gossip, to laugh and cry, all over a great meal.

The evening turned out to be all that and more. With our hearts and stomachs full, we asked for the check. When it arrived, I reached into my coat pocket to retrieve my wallet, only to discover I had accidentally left it at home. Talk about embarrassed! I had to

stick the entire bill on our good friends – well, they used to be good friends. When I got home, I was able to write and check and mail it, not only for our portion, but for the entire cost of the dinner.

- This little episode, as humiliating as it was at the time, provides a pretty decent analogy for something Jesus did when he made his reservation to come into our world.
 - We might say there was a big “wallet” of divine resources Jesus left at home when he came to earth.
- Listen carefully to Paul’s word regarding a decision Jesus made as he left the heavens next to the Father to take on flesh –

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. (Philippians 2:6-7)

- Jesus is God – 100%
 - He existed before his birth!
 - John confirms this at the opening of his gospel –

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. (John 1:1-2)

- But, Jesus didn’t want to take advantage of the amazing resources available to him as God when he walked the earth for 33.
- Why? Hebrews 4:15 tells us –

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. (Hebrews 4:15)

- Jesus is coming to represent all humanity and do over and make right what the first Adam failed to do when he fell to the temptation in the garden bringing sin and separation from God to us all. (Romans 5:12-14)
 - He didn’t want to tap into and take advantage of his divine resources. Makes sense.
- What specific resources or advantages might he be talking about?
 - Paul doesn’t list them here but there are three distinct advantages that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have over humanity –
 - Omnipresence (unlimited presence)
 - God can be all places at one time. Humans cannot.
 - Omniscience (unlimited knowledge)
 - God knows all things. Humans do not.
 - Omnipotence (unlimited power)

- God is all powerful. Humans are not.
- Verse 7 tells us that Jesus “made himself nothing.”
 - The Greek word is “kenosis” and in other translations we are told that Jesus “emptied himself.”
 - Using the restaurant analogy above, before Jesus left his home in heaven to come down and take on human flesh, he “emptied” his pockets of these three advantages.
 - The Message translation puts it this way –

When the time came, he *set aside the privileges of deity* and took on the status of a slave, became human! (Philippians 2:7 MSG, emphasis added)

- Jesus didn’t lose these three things, he merely left them behind and didn’t give himself access to them when he was away.
- Now that he has returned to the heavens and sits at the right hand of the Father, he has complete and full access to them again.

So, what does this mean?

- If you go back and reread all four gospels with this in mind you will see it.
- One – If Jesus wanted to go anywhere, he had to walk just like us.
- Second – Jesus didn’t know everything.
 - He sort of voluntarily entered into a state of temporary divine amnesia.
 - Luke 2:52 tells us that “*Jesus grew in wisdom and stature.*”
 - God can’t grow in wisdom.
 - Unless he left it behind and didn’t have access to it.
 - When the disciples pressed Jesus for more details about exactly when the end will come, Jesus gave them this reply:

But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. (Mark 13:32)

- As God, Jesus knows everything, unless he left that full knowledge behind when he became a man.
- Finally, Jesus didn’t possess the power to perform miracles.
 - What? Yeah, I know. But look a little more carefully.
 - After Jesus healed a blind man in the jealous religious leaders claimed that Jesus used the power of Satan to perform miracles.
 - Jesus challenged their accusation with this reply:

If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?...But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. (Matthew 12:26, 28)

- Just like with his resurrection, Jesus relied on the Holy Spirit to heal people and perform miracles.
- I've read this before, but I guess I never stopped long enough to really ponder what Jesus was saying.
- But when you reread the story of Jesus found in the four gospels it all lines up.
 - At the age of 30, Jesus begins his earthly ministry.
 - The inauguration starts at his baptism.
 - John's gospel tells us when Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit came down on him and *remained* with him.
 - The Holy Spirit didn't make a cameo appearance and then head back to the heavens. No, the Holy Spirit remained with Jesus.
 - Up to this point, Jesus hasn't performed any miracles.
 - In the very next chapter, Jesus' first miracle occurs – he turns water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana.

Same Power

During Jesus' 33 years on earth, he voluntarily lived each and every day, every moment, just like us.

- To accomplish his mission, he is going to have to rely on the knowledge of the Father and the power of the Holy Spirit to pull it off.
- And pull it off he did.

But there is one more thing you need to see. It comes from a prayer of Paul in the first chapter of Ephesians. You must pay attention –

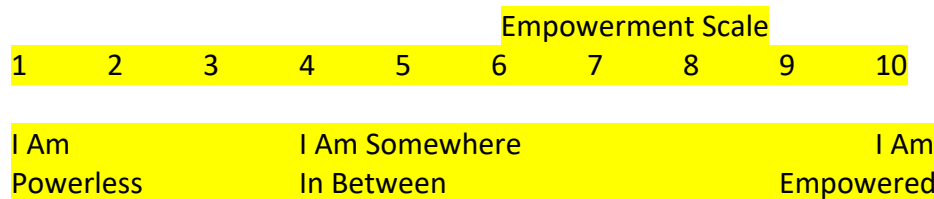
I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms... (Ephesians 1:18-20)

- Did you see it?
- **THE SAME POWER THAT RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD LIVES IN YOU!**
- What?
- In case we think we have misread this Paul repeats it again in his letter to the Romans –

And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. (Romans 8:11)

Let me ask you, how empowered is your life right now?

- If you were to plot yourself on a scale of one to ten, what number would you choose on the empowerment scale?



- (This is an opportunity to share your personal story)
- My Story:

When I went under contract to write His Mighty Strength, I would have plotted myself as an 8 or 9. But soon after I experience a serious bout of betrayal. About four people super close to me betrayed a commitment we made to one another.

This sent me into a mental and emotional tailspin, and I found myself clinically depressed – like a psychiatrist diagnosis. The irony was not lost on me – I was to write a book on tapping into the same power that raised Jesus from the dead and on most days, I couldn't raise myself from the couch.

Were these fresh theological discoveries about the nature of Jesus, his life on earth and promise of power misguided? Did I get it wrong?...because it certainly wasn't working for me.

Well, I ended up finishing the book – a very different, more empathetic book for sure. I will share my journey with you over the three weeks remaining in this series.

- As we dig deeper into the life of Jesus, we will discover he was showing us the way not only to eternal life, but to an empowered life today.
- Anybody interested in that?
- The power to...
 - ...forgive someone who has deeply hurt or betrayed you.
 - ...get through a difficult situation with dignity.
 - ...come alongside a friend or even a stranger who's struggling and make things better for them.
 - ...stamp out fear and rise above negative circumstances.
 - ...love more deeply.
 - ...persevere with grace in a difficult relationship.
 - ...expand your influence and experience more victories.
 - ...discover and live out God's purpose for your life.
 - ...be a conduit for God's miracles.
 - ...move mountains of impossibility.

- And best of all, in the end, the power to rise from the dead, just as Jesus did.

Conclusion:

It all centers on following the pattern of Jesus.

- He did three distinct things in his life that we will be asked to mimic.
- When we do, we will tap into that power source.
- These three things will be our focus over the next three weeks.

The pathway to the same power begins at your baptism.

- It all begins when you place your faith in Jesus Christ.
- When you personally “declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead” (Romans 10:9), you will not only be saved to eternal life but in that moment the Holy Spirit will come upon you and remain with you to empower your life to live out the will of God on earth. Believe in your heart.
- Let me ask you – have you made that decision?
- (Based on your church’s tradition, this would be a good time to give people an opportunity to receive Christ. When I did this message the first time, we called for spontaneous confessions and baptisms and 286 responded.)
- We want to give you the chance to make that decision today.

Prayer

His Mighty Strength

His Mighty Strength Series

Outline

The *What* of the Resurrection

The What – Jesus died and rose again on the third day

The *Why* of the Resurrection

The Why – Jesus’ resurrection conquered death once and for all

The *How* of the Resurrection

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. (1 Peter 3:18)

The How – The Holy Spirit raised Jesus from the dead

Jesus Emptied Himself

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- Omnipresence (unlimited presence)
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Limited Knowledge

Jesus grew in wisdom and stature. (Luke 2:52)

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Limited Power

If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?...But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. (Matthew 12:26, 28)

Same Power

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms... (Ephesians 1:18-20)

THE SAME POWER THAT RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD LIVES IN YOU!

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Empowerment Scale									
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I Am Powerless			I Am Somewhere In Between				I Am Empowered		

The pathway to the same power begins at your baptism.

Emptied
His Mighty Strength Series
Sermon 2 of 4

Introduction: Apollo 13

Jim Lovell was one of three astronauts on Apollo 8, the first manned mission to the moon.

- When Lovell and his two other astronaut companions entered the lunar orbit on Christmas eve 1968, they conducted a live TV broadcast showing pictures of the earth and the moon as seen from their spacecraft.
- They then took turns reading from the Book of Genesis, starting with “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” and concluding with “and God saw that it was good.”¹
- The microform Bible they read from went up for auction recently. Starting bid, \$50,000.² It was a really big deal. Later NASA challenged the astronauts to not wear their faith on their spacesuits and halted the practice for future missions.

Fast forward to April 17, 1970, Lovell has joined astronauts Fred Haise and Jack Swigert for the Apollo 13 mission.

- A routine stir of an oxygen tank ignited a spark, damaging wire insulation inside it.
- As a result, they didn’t have enough power needed for breathing and generating electrical power.
- The mission is aborted. They now move to the lunar module that was designed to touch down on the moon to conserve energy and act as a lifeboat back to earth.
- The problem? The lunar module was designed to support two men for two days. They now needed it to support three men for four days.
- This wasn’t the only problem. Back at mission control, they list a series of potential problems: (an option here is to show a YouTube clip. Here’s one I watched: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0zWYg8xbeU>. It starts with mission control listing out the problems below. You can go to 2:47; be mindful of copyright laws, language and ads).
 - The trajectory may be off

¹ <https://catholicphilly.com/2019/07/commentaries/astronauts-wore-faith-in-god-on-their-spacesuits/>

² <https://www.foxnews.com/science/astronauts-faith-tiny-apollo-13-bible-up-for-auction>

- The thrusters may be frozen
- The guidance system could malfunction
- The heat shield could be cracked
- The parachutes might be three blocks of ice
- Other than that...things looked pretty promising (just kidding).
- Seconds before they were to hit re-entry, Lovell turns to the other two men and says, "Gentlemen, it has been a privilege flying with you."
- Things are now completely out of their control. Put yourself in their suits.

Emptying

This is precisely what Jesus did when he entered the earth's atmosphere.

- He volunteered for the assignment to provide the only way mankind could come back into a relationship with God that was lost in the Garden of Eden back "in the beginning."
- As we saw last week in our study, he emptied himself of control.
- Jesus left behind his – (Build)
 - Omnipresence – He could only be in one place at a time
 - Omniscience – He didn't know everything
 - Omnipotence – he didn't have access to his divine power
- Jesus put himself in a completely vulnerable situation. Why?
 - He wanted to identify with our weakness. (Hebrews 4:15)
 - He wanted to show us the way to tap into the same power that raised him from the dead.

If we want to tap into the same power that raised Jesus from the dead we too must put ourselves in a vulnerable position.

- Jesus emptied himself of control
- We must empty ourselves of the illusion of control
 - Jesus actually had control over all things. (Colossians 1:15-17)

- We were never in control. It is just an illusion.
- All of us are control freaks in one form or another. Some of us got it bad –
 - Turn to your neighbor and ask them if they are known to be a backseat driver or one who is constantly stepping on the imaginary brake on the passenger side of the car.
 - Story or joke.
- So, giving up even the illusion of control is super hard for us. But if we want to tap into the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, this is step one.

Fear Not

How many times does the Bible challenge us to “fear not”? 365 (Build)

- The answer: 365 times³
- That is one for every day of the year.
- That seems to suggest to me that this is not a “one and done” declaration, but something we must declare daily.

In His Mighty Strength, Randy Frazee drills down into one of those 365 times where Jesus invites the disciples not to be so afraid of the storm they experienced because Jesus was in the boat with them.

Let’s take a look at another one of the 365 instances – the life of David.

- As a 16-year-old boy David is anointed to be the next king of Israel to replace Saul who repeatedly disobeyed the instructions of God. (1 Samuel 16)
 - As David is being anointed by the prophet Samuel, something happens to David –

So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. (1 Samuel 16:13)

- The Holy Spirit came upon David and gave David access to the power.
 - Now, as a New Testament believer in Jesus, you automatically receive the Holy Spirit when you trust in Jesus and he remains with you as he did with Jesus during his earthly life.
 - In the Old Testament, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was selective and often times temporary.

³ <https://www.soulshpherding.org/fear-not-365-days-a-year/>

- In the very next chapter, we see evidence of this mighty strength when David single-handedly takes out a nine-foot-tall giant named Goliath with a slingshot and a single stone.
- We quickly learn that King Saul, who will remain in power for fourteen more years, gets so jealous of David's power and popularity that he tries to kill him.
 - This sends David on the run as a fugitive.
 - When our kids are just getting their driver's license and thinking about the High School prom, David is on the run from a king.
- On one occasion during these fourteen years, David is on the run and encounters the King of the Philistines – yes, the King who just lost his greatest warrior, Goliath.
 - To make matters worse the place David came from (Nob) just happened to give David Goliath's sword. For some reason he had it and gave it to David. So David is back in Goliath's hometown of Gath standing in front of the King with Goliath's sword!
 - We are told that David was *afraid*. No kidding!
 - Wouldn't you be?
 - David feels like Jim Lovell and his friends about to re-enter the earth's atmosphere.
 - David is in a completely uncontrollable situation.
 - We are told that he pretends that he's insane –

...while he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard. (1 Samuel 21:13)

- That's what he did on the outside, but what was he thinking on the inside?
- Actually, he was praying – a Prayer of Lament (which you pray when you are in distress – this qualifies!).
- The prayer is recorded in Psalm 56.
- Look at verses 3-4 –

David's Prayer of Lament (Psalm 56)

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? (Psalm 56:3-4)

- David admits he is afraid but immediately transfers his fear to his trust in God who is bigger than his fears.
- “*What can mere mortals do to me?*” he says.
- By the way, he didn't just rehearse this prayer once. Read through the Psalms. You will find it was a 365-day discipline for David.

This is the same conclusion Jesus was trying to pass on to the disciples in the boat.

- We always thought Jesus wasn't afraid of the storm because he was God and had control over the storm.
 - But we have learned that even though Jesus was 100% God, he left behind or emptied himself of his control over nature.
 - He was trusting in the power of God the Father and the Holy Spirit to overcome the storm.
 - He is inviting us to do the very same thing.
 - Here's the principle we need to walk away with today –

We can empty ourselves of the illusion of control when we trust that God is bigger than our fears

- Frazee writes –

Jesus invites his followers...to give up the illusion that we have control over what happens to us and then entrust our life to the only one who is actually stronger than the storms we face. - Randy Frazee

Personal Story

(Option: Insert your own illustration or story of your experience of emptying yourself of the illusion of control or your struggle to do so.)

Randy Frazee shares his experience with this action step after he had experienced a serious bout of betrayal by some "close friends" –

"When the storm of betrayal ravaged my life, the waves crashed over and filled the boat with toxic water. It felt as if fear itself were coursing through my veins and my heart pounding out of my chest. Eventually, much of what had been my life capsized, and I was left holding onto little more than debris without a life preserver in sight. I had lost control and felt like I was drowning." (*His Mighty Strength*, pg. 35)

"The betrayal was the unexpected storm that hit my life, but it actually wasn't what dropped me into a dark season of powerlessness. The root cause of the fear that drove me into a state of anxiety and depression was losing the illusion of control over my circumstances. This was a very important discovery. While I needed to work through the trauma of what had been done to me and eventually forgive those who had trespassed against me, the biggest challenge I faced was being forced to admit I was incapable of controlling my life at all, much less controlling it in my own strength." (*His Mighty Strength*, pg. 36)

"For sure, I knew this would not be the last violent storm I would experience, or the last time I would feel powerless over my circumstances. I also knew it was time to take a big

risk – to empty myself of the illusion of control and turn control of my life and my circumstances over to God.” (*His Mighty Strength*, pg. 37)

Application

So how does one go about turning over the control of our lives to God?

- Randy shared a spiritual practice he engages in.
- You don’t do it just once and presto all is well.
- Like David of the Old Testament, learning to “Fear not” is a 365-day discipline.

I thought it would be good for us to end our time in the Word today with this application.

- If you want to experience the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, then we must follow or mimic the pattern of Jesus.
- The first thing Jesus did was to put himself in a vulnerable position and empty himself of control.
- We must daily do the same thing.
- So, whether you feel you are in the middle of storm or have a king tracking you down to take your life or things are going just fine for you now, I want to invite you to join me in turning the illusion of control of our lives over to God because we trust he is bigger than our fears. (You can invite people who are willing to stand up or come down to the front and stand before you as you lead them in this exercise)

The Spiritual Exercise

- First clinch your fist as tightly as you can.
 - Squeeze a little harder.
 - Let the tension run up your arm as your body connects with the brokenness in your spirit.
 - Now tell God the fear, the tension, the worry, the anxiety you are experiencing.
 - Lay your request before him. (Philippians 2:6-7)
- Now, turn your palms upward and open them fully.
 - Release the tension.
 - Acknowledge your inability to deal with what you are facing in your own power.
 - Take a deep breath.
 - One more and then say out loud, *“God, I am powerless to handle this on my own. I desperately need your help!”*
- Now, turn your open hands over, palms facing down.
 - This symbolizes letting go of all you have been holding onto.
 - Turn the burden over to God.
 - Say this prayer out loud, *“God, I am trusting in you and you alone to see me through this.”*

- Now stay in this moment for a bit. Breath in and out and let the Spirit confirm with your spirit that you are a child of God and he's got you. (Romans 8:14-17, 26-27)

Conclusion

How did things turn out for Jim Lovell and his astronaut friends on Apollo 13?

- The total blackout of re-entry would be three minutes. No re-entry went past four minutes.
- Option 1: show clip of re-entry (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aozWYg8xbeU>; If you have time 5:43-8:36 is pretty inspiring. If you have less time, there are several clean stopping places).
- Option 2: Verbally share the story
 - After they hit four minutes you could see hope literally being sucked out of NASA command center and every household around the world.
 - Five minutes pass. Hope is all but lost.
 - Then, when the clock struck 6 minutes, the capsule carrying the three astronauts breaks through the sky, the parachutes open and Jim Lovell says, *"Hello Houston, this is Odyssey. It's good to see you again."*
 - That was April 17, 1970. Jim Lovell is now 92 years old.

How will things turn out for you?

- Keep emptying yourself of the illusion of control and free yourself of being "on call" 24/7 trying to keep the pieces of your life intact and in place. It's exhausting.
- Trust God and I am quite sure you will be happy with the ultimate outcome and enjoy the journey along the way.

Prayer

Emptied
His Mighty Strength Series
Sermon 2 of 4

Emptying

- Jesus emptied himself of control
- We must empty ourselves of the illusion of control

Fear Not

How many times does the Bible challenge us to “fear not”? 365

David’s Prayer of Lament (Psalm 56)

When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me? (Psalm 56:3-4)

- We can empty ourselves of the illusion of control when we trust that God is bigger than our fears.

Aligned
His Mighty Strength Series
Sermon 3 of 4

Introduction

Once there was a little boy who lived in the country.

For facilities, they had to use an outhouse, and the little boy hated it because it was hot in the summer, cold in the winter and stunk all the time. The outhouse was sitting on the bank of a creek and the boy determined that one day he would push that outhouse into the water.

One day after a spring rain, the creek was swollen so the little boy decided today was the day to push the outhouse into the creek. So, he got a large stick and pushed. Finally, the outhouse toppled into the creek and floated away.

That night his dad told him they were going to the woodshed after supper. Knowing that meant a spanking, the little boy asked why...

The dad replied, "Someone pushed the outhouse into the creek today. It was you, wasn't it, son?"

The boy answered yes.

Then he thought a moment and said, "Dad, I read in school today that George Washington chopped down a cherry tree and didn't get into trouble because he told the truth..."

The dad replied, "Well, son, George Washington's father wasn't in that cherry tree!"

There is something in our nature that drives us to cut down cherry trees and topple outhouses.

Things were very different in the life and nature of Jesus and it was key to his ability to access a power so strong it raised him from the dead.

- If we want to have access to this power, we must learn and follow the pattern of Jesus.
 - Jesus' life shows us the way to tap into the same power that raised him from the dead.
- This is the single goal of this series – to teach us how to walk daily in this power.

Review

Here is what we've seen so far:

- When Jesus left the heavens seated next to the Father, he voluntarily left behind or "emptied his pocket" of the three Omni's.
- Jesus left behind his – (Build)

- Omnipresence– He could only be in one place at a time
- Omniscience – He didn’t know everything
- Omnipotence – he didn’t have access to his divine power
- He put himself in the same position of weakness we are in to show us the way.
- Last time we were together we learned the first of three practices Jesus wants to teach us:

We must empty ourselves of the illusion of control

Think of it this way –

- There are things we can control – (Diamond which reads “Things we can control”)
- There are things that really matter – (Diamond which reads “Things that really matter”)
- Our lives should focus on the overlap of these two boxes. (Highlight overlap)¹
- Leave the rest to God

Aligned

Today we’re going to look at the second step that Jesus took that teaches us how to tap into the same power that raised him from the dead.

- Let me state the big idea and then we will unpack it together in scriptures –

Jesus aligned his entire life to the will of the Father

- Randy Frazee covered this pretty thoroughly in chapter 3 of *His Mighty Strength*.
 - I don’t know about you, but I’ve read every Bible verse presented on the life of Jesus that said he focused on the will of the Father, but it really struck me when I saw them all together.
 - Jesus was literally obsessed with aligning his life to the will of the Father.
- Let’s just list a few of them –

Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. “Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed.” (John 5:19-20)

“For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.” (John 6:38)

¹ Illustration came from Chris Brown

So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.” (John 8:28)

He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, “My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” (Matthew 26:39 NLT)

- Jesus was not given to disobeying the father. He did cut down cherry trees unless the Father told him to do so. He didn’t topple outhouses into the creek unless the Father told him to do so.
- There is an utter submission to what the Father wanted.

Why did he do this?

- Because Jesus left behind his “Omniscience” he didn’t know everything.
 - Luke 2:52 tells us he was growing in wisdom as he was growing in stature.
 - That’s why when asked, he didn’t know when the kingdom was coming. Only the Father knew.
 - Now, keep in mind he knows the exact date now that he’s back with the Father, but he didn’t know when he walked this earth among us.
- Jesus not only taught us to “seek first the kingdom of God” (Matthew 6:33), but he actually practiced it when he was here with us – like 24/7.
- Why was Jesus so obsessed with aligning his life to the will of the Father? (Build)
 - He didn’t know the full plan
 - He wanted to show us the way through his teaching and his life
 - The power of God is reserved for the will of God
 - One of the reasons we don’t experience the power of God in our life is because we want it to accomplish our will, not God’s will.

Story

(This is a true story I experienced as a pastor. You can replace this story with one of your own if you prefer).

Jennifer was a young woman with a big dream to make a difference in the lives of hurting people who would benefit from her sharp mind, skilled hands, and tender heart. She knew if she realized her dream, it would be miraculous since her family was not in a position to help her financially. In fact, if she finished, Jennifer would become the first member of her family to graduate from college.

After completing high school and earning good grades, Jennifer took the second step by applying to a college with a strong nursing program. Thanks to her grade point average, she got accepted, but this was only half the battle. Her dream would have to be deferred because she didn’t have the money to pay her tuition. But she didn’t give up. She got a job and began saving

every penny she could from her paycheck, hoping one day to have enough for college. Week by week, dollar by dollar, she saved her money in a special box that she hid in her bedroom.

To save living expenses, Jennifer lived with her single mom and fourteen-year-old brother. He had some run-ins with the police for stealing things and had begun to get in trouble in school. It was no secret that he experimented with drugs as well. But Jennifer loved her brother and prayed for him every day. When others accused and judged him, she always stuck up for him and encouraged him to stay on the right path. Despite the turmoil in her family, Jennifer pressed on toward her dream, getting one step closer with every paycheck.

One week, she went to deposit her money into her savings box. When she opened it, she discovered that all but \$20 was missing. She was crushed by the realization that her own brother had stolen from her to support his drug habit. Her dream now seemed further away than ever, and all because of her brother's betrayal.

The next morning was Sunday. When she got into the church parking lot she was so deeply wounded and angry at her brother that she almost decided not to come in. But she did. As she sat through the sermon, the pastor was speaking on "the Widow's Mite" about a woman who gave all she had to God.

Right there in the service she whispered a prayer to forgive her brother. She knew this was God's will. Not only that, but she also put the remaining \$20 in the offering plate. She declared through this single act of giving all she had, like the widow, she was "all in" and would trust God to accomplish his good plan for her life.

Challenge

This is a beautiful example of following the pattern of Jesus

- Jennifer strongly sensed that the will of God for her life was to become a nurse to help other people. She aligned her life to that purpose.
- Jennifer emptied herself of the illusion she could control her life and turned it over to God.
- She aligned her life to the will of the Father and forgave her brother.

What is the will of God for our lives right now as a church?

- This is an opportunity to share what you feel God is calling your church to do or focus on.

What is the will of God for your life personally?

- What is God asking of you?
- Maybe he's asking you to...
 - ...forgive someone who has deeply hurt you.
 - ...break off a toxic relationship.

- ...start taking care of yourself.
- ...go back to school.
- ...start something new.
- ...join a small group, a support group, a recovery group.
- ...get help for an addiction or any self-defeating habit.
- ...retire from your job and devote your time to helping people.
- ...maybe he is just calling you to tell someone you love them who desperately needs to hear these words from you.

When we align our lives to the will of the Father, as we will see next week, he will provide the same power that raised Jesus from the dead to see it through.

- The power of God is reserved for the will of God.
- Align your life to the will of the God and then watch what happens.

Conclusion

So, how does Jennifer's story end?

The next day she wrote out her story and dropped it off at the church for the pastor. Her letter was meant for nothing else than a word of encouragement for the pastor for his message. As a matter of fact, she only signed her first name on the blank sheet of paper.

The pastor received the letter and tried all week to figure out Jennifer's identity and get her contact information, but he was unsuccessful. All he had to go on was that she was a young woman named Jennifer who attended our church. No return address. Nothing. She obviously had no expectation the pastor would contact her or do anything about her dilemma. Her only motive was to share how one of his sermons had encouraged her to trust God completely, no matter the circumstances of her life.

The next Sunday at our early service, the pastor read the letter to the congregation without revealing any names. Afterward a family came to the front of the church to see him. With tears in their eyes, they asked if they could talk to woman in the letter. This family, along with two others, wanted to pay Jennifer's college tuition. Not just the first year, but all four!

When he read the letter in the second service, he added, "If the person who wrote this letter is here today, please come to see me." A young woman timidly approached the pastor immediately after the service. It was Jennifer. When he told her about the families' generous offer, she wept uncontrollably—tears of disbelief and joy.

Jennifer finished college and nursing school at the top of her class. Today she is an oncology nurse, a loving wife, and a devoted mom. Her dream has come true, and she blesses many people with her gifts – the call of God for her life.

Her Lower Story was all about betrayal, anger and disappointment, but when she came to a place where she could trust God in spite of her circumstances, and align her life to his calling, she discovered and experienced a power beyond herself.

That's what Jesus is talking about.

So, the next time you have the urge to chop down a cherry tree or topple an outhouse into the creek, first ask, "What would my Father want me to do?"

(A good way to end the sermon may be for people pray the Lord's pray. Note the very beginning of the prayer is "your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.")

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us,

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power and the glory forever, Amen.

Aligned
His Mighty Strength Series
Sermon 3 of 4

Review

- Jesus left behind his – (Build)
 - Omnipresence– He could only be in one place at a time
 - Omniscience – He didn’t know everything
 - Omnipotence – he didn’t have access to his divine power

We must empty ourselves of the illusion of control

Insert Diamond illustration

Aligned

Jesus aligned his entire life to the will of the Father

Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed.” (John 5:19-20)

“For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.” (John 6:38)

So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up^[a] the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.” (John 8:28)

He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, “My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.” (Matthew 26:39 NLT)

- Jesus was not given to disobeying the father. He did cut down cherry trees unless the Father told him to do so. He didn't topple outhouses into the creek unless the Father told him to do so.
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Why was Jesus so obsessed with aligning his life to the will of the Father?

- He didn't know the full plan.
- He wanted to show us the way through his teaching and his life.
- The power of God is reserved for the will of the God.

Challenge

What is the will of God for our lives right now as a church?

What is the will of God for your life personally?

Empowered
His Mighty Strength Series
Sermon 4 of 4

Introduction

At the opening of chapter 5 of *His Mighty Strength*, Randy Frazee shared his boyhood dream to be Ultraman. His parents got him an Ultraman costume for Halloween one year and he said,

“When I put on the outfit, I became Ultraman. This suit of steel (actually polyester) not only helped me bag some amazing candy that October 31, but also helped me for several days after as I saved the world from space monsters a million times over and even rescued many damsels in distress. Why has a space monster never come after you? Because I took him out before he got to you. You’re welcome.”

- Turn to your neighbor and share the superhero you want most like to be.
- (Here is a chance for you to share your favorite superhero and the story behind it.)
- The Point: Whether your favorite superhero is Ultraman, Superman, Wonder Woman or *[insert your superhero]*, the point it is – When we become adults, it’s time to take off our superhero capes and get on with real life. We are just ordinary people trying to get through the day.
 - We are not trying to be faster than a speeding bullet...we’re just trying not to get too far behind.
 - We are not more powerful than a locomotive...we’re just trying to get our work done without throwing out our back.
 - We can’t leap tall buildings in a single bound...we’re just trying to climb a flight of stairs without being so winded.

This is the attitude I took until I came across a prayer of Paul’s for believers in Jesus and read it real slow. Let me do that now –

I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.

I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 1:18-20)

- Paul tells us that *“the same power that raised Jesus from the dead also lives in us.”*
- So maybe we need to hold off on putting away our capes and dig in a little deeper to discover how we might tap into this power.

Review

What we have learned over these three weeks is that everything we need to know is found in the life of Jesus.

Step one: Jesus emptied himself of control

- When Jesus left heaven to enter our world, he put himself in a vulnerable position.
- He became a human and embraced all the limitations that came with it.
- While he is still 100% God, he voluntarily left behind his access to unlimited knowledge and unlimited power during his 33 year stay on earth.
- To access this amazing power, we are invited to do the same with a little twist –

Step 1: We must empty ourselves of the illusion of control

- We don't have to put ourselves in a vulnerable position, we are already there.
- We just need to admit it.
- We need to take the first step an alcoholic takes in the 12-step class – admit we are powerless, and our lives are completely unmanageable.
- We need God's help.

Step two: Jesus aligned his entire life to the will of the Father

- Because Jesus didn't know everything, like when the kingdom was going to come, he had to rely on the Father through prayer.
- As we learned last week, Jesus didn't make a single move without first consulting the Father to see what he wanted.
- To access the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, we are invited to do the very same thing.

Step 2: We must align our entire life to the will of the Father

- The power of God is reserved only for the will of God.
- Jesus taught us when we align our lives to the will of the Father, the power will be there to accomplish it, no matter what it is.
- Every one of the 39 miracles recorded in the gospels was the will of the Father, therefore, he was empowered to perform them.
- We learned in the Garden of Gethsemane that it was the will of the Father for Jesus to be crucified. Jesus aligned his life to the will of the Father and in the end he accomplishes the task and is even raised from the dead.

Empowered

Now for the final step – Empowered

Let's take a look at Acts 10 verses 37-38 –

You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. (Acts 10:37-38)

- As God, Jesus voluntarily emptied himself of his access to power when he walked on this earth. He puts himself in the same position as us.
- At his baptism the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus and he now has access to divine power.
- With this power he performed some amazing miracles and healings.
- How did he do it, *“because God was with him.”* God, the Holy Spirit stayed with Jesus and empowered him to execute the will of the Father.
- The same access is available to us who believe.

The word “Power” in the New Testament is the Greek word “dunamis” where we get our word “dynamite.”

- **Power = *Dunamis* = Dynamite (Build)**
- Believers in Jesus have access to spiritual dynamite that can blow through any obstacle we face that is aligned against the will of the Father for our lives or our world.

What must we do to ignite or detonate this power within us?

Step 3: We must not try harder in our own strength but yield harder to the Holy Spirit

A man named Zerubbabel in the Old Testament was charged by God to rebuild the temple that was destroyed by the Babylonians.

- The task seemed insurmountable.
- An angel comes to him and tells him how he's going to pull it off –

This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the LORD Almighty. “What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground.” (Zechariah 4:6-7)

- The building of the temple is compared to a mountain that stands before Zerubbabel. He will not be able to accomplish this by simply trying harder in his own strength.
- The strength to level this mountain will come from the Spirit of God within him.

- Jesus told us this –

“Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.” (Matthew 17:20)

- If we had just even a little faith in God’s Spirit we can move the mountains in our life too.

Story

(You can insert your own story if you’d like; If you use Caylin’s story, feel free to edit it. Also, there are some wonderful videos and pics of Caylin online you may want to use to tell the story).

Caylin (pronounced K – eye – lin) Moore as raised in Compton, California – a place filled with gangs, violent crimes, drugs, murders, broken families and poverty. The future for Caylin, or anyone living in Compton for that matter, was not very promising.

When Caylin was in fourth grade, the doctors found a tumor on one of the chambers of his mom’s heart. This news devastated Caylin and only further eroded the little security he had. It was during this time he was walking through a Kmart parking lot where he found a comic book laying on the ground. He read the comic in its entirety twenty times in a single setting.

Caylin says, “I heard about Superman, I heard about Batman, I heard about Spiderman, but I had never heard about the Carpenter who would go from town to town offering people miracles and offering them eternal life.” So, he began to pray to this “Handy Man” and his mom’s surgery went well. However, while she was in the hospital, she was repeatedly raped by one of the hospital workers.

This devastating experience threw his mom in a state of depression that relegated her to the couch for months. To provide food for the family, Caylin as the oldest child, would leave the house at 6:00 in the morning to collect cans for cash. He had no choice but to become the man of the family.

Caylin says, “I had to pick my hero off the ground.” His best idea came from a movie he watched where a black woman washed her hair and it revitalized her and brought her back to life. So, Caylin puts a chair in the bathtub and wraps a garbage bag around it. He then gets his mom off the couch, undresses her, places her in the chair and gives her a bath and washes her hair. He said his mom let out a gasp and he noticed she started breathing differently. Whatever bondage she was under was loosed and she began the journey of recovery and became his mom once again.

Soon after this event, Caylin's mom, a woman of faith, was sitting with her children in church. When the offering basket came around, Caylin's mom pulls out a five-dollar bill. For an uncomfortable amount of time, she looks back and forth at the five-dollar bill and the offering plate. It was just a few years ago that Caylin learned that his mom was trying to decide whether to give the five dollars to God or use it to feed her children. She decided to give it to God that day. It was also on that day she that took her children forward to be baptized. "She not only gave all the money she had to God," Caylin says, "she gave her kids to God on that day."

With a strong emphasis on faith and education, Caylin and his siblings are growing and getting along in Compton. One day as a sophomore in high school he's at a football practice with the team. Caylin was the quarterback. Helicopters began flying overhead, which was not unusual in "the hood." A few minutes later, a police officer came and took Caylin off the field. The helicopters that day were for his dad. He had just killed his girlfriend and the now the police were looking for him. His dad was eventually sentenced to life in prison.

The next stop is Marist College in New York on a football scholarship. Things are looking up. Then a severe back injury ends his football career before it really gets started. The doctors told him he will not only not play football again. He would likely never walk the same again. It's now Caylin who finds himself relegated to a couch for three months. It is here he receives a dream that one day he would play division one football and get a PhD from Harvard. He even posted the vision on the ceiling above his bed. He said the dream didn't have anything to do with football or Harvard. At the time, he didn't know what a PhD was or where Harvard was on a map. "It was a vision," Caylin said, "to break a generational curse."

Instead of heading back to Compton, Caylin humbled himself and became a janitor at the college so he could continue his education. This was the only way he could reach the dream God had given him.

One day when Caylin was mopping a hallway, one of his past football teammates passes by on his way to the cafeteria. The teammate then turns around and tells Caylin he missed a spot. When Caylin inquired where the spot might be, the teammate spit on the floor. But he had just heard a quote from a famous preacher that day that changed his perspective and his response. He told his taunter, "Bring your food back here and put it on the floor and eat it off this floor. That's how clean this floor is going to be when you get back." The quote he heard that day was from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—

"If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.'"¹

¹<https://www.google.com/search?q=martin+luther+king+jr+quote+street+sweeper&og=Martin+Luther+King%2C+Jr.+quote++stree&ags=chrome.1.69i57j0l4.17371j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

Caylin experienced a full recovery and went on to play division one football for Texas Christian University on a full scholarship. But this is not all. During the summer of his junior year, he studied at Princeton University in their Policy Institute. He became a Fulbright Scholar and studied at the University of Bristol in England. In Caylin's senior year, he was named a Rhodes Scholar and traveled to Oxford, England to secure his master's degree.

What's the secret of Caylin's power? Caylin says,

"God can insert himself into our situation when we understand that we don't belong to circumstances, but we belong to God. And with that mindset we need to know, that we need to dream dreams that are so big, so above our circumstances, so unfathomable, so unimaginable, so unreasonable, so unrealistic that our dreams are destined to fail without the divine intervention of God."²

Today Caylin, 25 years old, is married a wonderful Christian woman who is an Olympian in the 2020 games in Japan. They have a beautiful daughter. He is now working on his PhD in psychology at Stanford. Caylin has also published his story in a great book entitled, "A Dream Too Big: The Story of the Improbable Journey from Compton to Oxford."³

This contemporary display of power was explained to Caylin as a boy through a comic book on a superhero named Jesus, the Carpenter.

What God has done in Caylin's life...he can do in our life if we follow the pattern of Jesus.

Challenge

(You can lead through this experience base on the tradition and culture of your church. You can have people stay in their seats or invite people to come down to the front)

So what mountains are you facing right now? What challenges lie before you?

- We have learned in this series that believers in Jesus have access to the same power that raised him from the dead.
- Jesus showed us with his very life how to access this power.
- He gave us three important spiritual steps to take.
- Are you prepared to take all three?

Step 1: We must empty ourselves of the illusion of control

² To hear Caylin's talk at Westside Family Church, go to <https://www.randyfrazee.com/teaching> - Against All Odds/Caylin Moore

³ Caylin Louis Moore, *A Dream Too Big: The Improbable Journey from Compton to Oxford* (Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2019.

- Maybe you've never given your life to God. Maybe you're holding on to control of your life and your destiny.
 - Remember, only those who have Jesus in their life have access to the power.
 - Today, I want to invite you to trust God with your life; come into a personal relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Maybe you are a Christian, but you're still living your life like you did before you came to Jesus.
 - Maybe you're a little tired, a little weary.
 - Jesus tells us, in him it doesn't have to be this way.
- Open your hands towards God and say – "I empty myself of the illusion of control and turn my life over to you."

Step 2: We must align our entire life to the will of the Father

- What is God calling you to right now?
- Maybe you don't know what that is? You feel like you are drifting, a little lost.
 - Maybe you have never really considered what God wanted you to do.
 - You've made a practice of doing what you want or think is best and then ask God to bless it.
 - Of course, it doesn't work that way. Remember the power of God is reserved for the will of God.
- Maybe you know what it is. His still small voice has whispered it into your spirit.
 - For some reason you haven't made the commitment to move forward.
 - Why not?
 - Are you afraid? If it's God's will, you don't need to be afraid. Be strong and courageous.
- Open your hands towards God and say – "I align my entire life to your will. Show me and I will follow."

Step 3: We must not try harder in our own strength but yield harder to the Holy Spirit

- If you've given God control of your life and aligned your life to his will, all that's left to do is to yield the right of way to the Holy Spirit within you.
- Don't force it; don't overwork it.
- God's Spirit will work things out in his time.
 - "God is never late, he's never early...but he is always on time."
 - I think that's right according to my experience with God.
- So, stop striving and let God's Spirit go to work.
- Open your hands towards God and say, "I yield to the power of the Holy Spirit within me to overcome this mountain."

And let us not forget the ultimate mountain we need to overcome. When we give up our final breath and have lost complete control to do anything about it, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead will raise us from the dead to live with God forever and ever.

So maybe it's time to pick up those capes again, strap them on because although we are mere humans, a superhero lives in us. (You might consider having a cape and putting it on.)

Closing prayer

Empowered
His Mighty Strength Series
Sermon 4 of 4

I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.

I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 1:18-20)

Review

Step 1: We must empty ourselves of the illusion of control

Step 2: We must align our entire life to the will of the Father

Empowered

You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. (Acts 10:37-38)

Power = *Dunamis* = Dynamite

What must we do to ignite or detonate this power within us?

Step 3: We must not try harder in our own strength but yield harder to the Holy Spirit

"This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty. 'What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground.'" (Zechariah 4:6-7)

"Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." (Matthew 17:20)