

The POWER Available to Us

(Selected Scriptures)

3/30/08

Introduction:

Ephesians 3:20-21

Power is Needed

All Power is from God.

What Power is available to every child of God?

I. *All believers have* the Power of God's SPIRIT

(God's Presence is Powerful)

ACTS 1:1-11

> ***Acts 1:8***
> *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

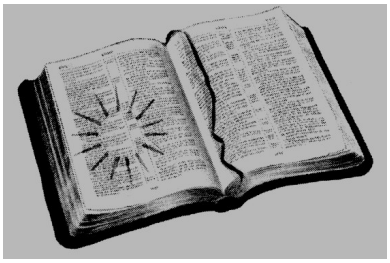


II. *All believers have* the Power of God's GOSPEL

(God's Word is Powerful)

Romans 1:16

> ***Romans 1:16***
> *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

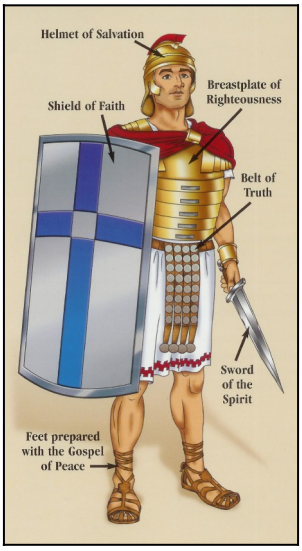


III. *All believers have* the Power of God's ARMOR

(God's Protection is Powerful)

Ephesians 6:10-11

> ***Ephesians 6:10-11***
> *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*



Conclusion:

Faith and Power go together (wherever you find one, you find the other) ***Acts 6:8***



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Introduction:

Ephesians 3:20-21
Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

"Exceeding abundantly" - God is able to perform superabundantly above and beyond all that we can ask (pray) or think

God's power that is available is already resident and presently actively energizing us.

He wants to do so much more than we are willing to let Him.

Power is Needed

In light of the Spiritual forces at work against us.

In light of the great work God wants to accomplish in & through us.

All Power is from God.

Creative Power
Romans 1:20
For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Ruling Power (Authorities; Govt.)
Romans 13:1
Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Scriptures demonstrating God's Power:

1 Corinthians 4:20
For the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in power.

2 Corinthians 12:9
And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Ephesians 1:19
And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

Colossians 1:11
Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

2 Timothy 1:7
For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

2 Peter 1:3
According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

What Power is available to every child of God?

I. ***All believers have*** **the Power of God's <u>Spirit</u>**
(God's <u>Presence</u> is Powerful)

ACTS 1:1-11

The Gospel of Luke describes what Jesus <u>began</u> to do (and John said if all of that was written, the world couldn't contain the books [Jn. 21:25] and now Acts describes what Jesus <u>continued</u> to do by the Holy Spirit.

> ***Acts 1:8***
> *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

Acts is a <u>bridge</u> (transition) between the Gospels and the Epistles.

The "Acts of the Apostles" should really be called "the acts of the Holy Spirit."

"Showed Himself alive" - When we gather in worship today, we do <u>not</u> do so in memory of a dead leader; but in the real presence of a living Lord!

"Many infallible proofs" - Jesus talked with the disciples (Lk. 24:13-32), ate with them (Lk. 24:41-43), and showed His scars (Lk. 24:13-32).

NOTE: The disciples expected a literal kingdom (v. 6), and Jesus didn't deny it (v. 7), but they were not to know the exact time.
They were to be occupied during the time before it, and so are we!

"Cloud" - probably the Shekinah, the divine cloud of glory which rested above the tabernacle in the days of Moses, signifying the presence of the Lord (Ex. 40:34). (Kent, p. 25).

At end of Tribulation, Jesus will return with "clouds of glory" (Dan. 7:13; Mt. 24:30; Rev. 1:7) and will stand upon the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4).

This day (40 days after His death), Jesus went "out of their sight;" but He would not go out of their lives. He would not abandon them, because ten days later His Spirit was to come into the hearts of every one who believed in Him. The Disciples would not be left alone!

ILLUS: of being left alone.

JESUS HAS NOT LEFT US ALONE!

I. Jesus left us a spiritual teacher (that we might know His will)
II. Jesus left us a spiritual companion (that we might desire His will)
III. jesus left us spiritual power (that we might do His will)

John 16:7
Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.
- "Expedient" = better, to your advantage
Jesus is saying in a sense: "John, it is better that my hands should not rest upon your head again, better that you would not be able to lay your head upon this bosom of mine and feel the beating of My heart, better that I do not walk beside you Myself; for if I go not away, the Holy Spirit will not come, and I could not be enjoyed by everyone who believed."

How is it expedient (better) for Christ to go away? His presence by the Spirit, in the heart and life of every believer could not be a reality unless He went to Heaven. Suppose for sake of argument, that Jesus had stayed in the world, living an eternal life on the human level merely, in a physical body. If today He was in Jerusalem, how could we--who live in NYC--fellowship with Him? If he was in NYC, and gathered all of His people into one place here, what about the people in South America, etc.?

But now, by means of the Holy Spirit, Christ is with every believer! He is with every true, Bible-believing local church! He is with "the two or three gathered together." He is with us always (and everywhere) even unto the end of the world!

With the descent of the Holy Spirit, geographical limitations ended! Paul saw this fact when he said: "Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh; even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him so (in this way) no more." Peter said, referring to Christ: "Whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory"

Therefore, now <u>everywhere</u> is Christ's power, everywhere is Christ's presence, everywhere Christ is teaching! Why? Because His Spirit is here!

John 14:12 - "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."

"Greater works" = not greater in quality, but greater in <u>extent</u>. (Jesus is now everywhere! via the Holy Spirit)

JESUS HAS <u>NOT</u> LEFT US <u>ALONE</u>! (You must realize that you are <u>never alone</u>! We are not left to ourselves.)

A. **JESUS LEFT US A <u>SPIRITUAL TEACHER</u>** (. . . that we might <u>know</u> His will) (v. 1-3) (God <u>feeds</u> us His <u>precepts</u> through the Holy Spirit)

"Commandments" = what commands? The command to "go into all the world and make disciples . . ." (Mt. 28) The command to stay in Jerusalem until they received the power to do such evangelism.

Without the Holy Spirit we would not <u>understand</u>, <u>remember</u>, or <u>apply</u> the Word of God. We would have no direction, insight, or wisdom.

<u>Read John 14:26; 16:7-15</u>.

I Jn. 2:27 - "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

I Thes. 1:5 - "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake."

The Bible says: "That the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . ."

The day you trust Christ is the day your eyes are opened.

B. **JESUS LEFT US A SPIRITUAL COMPANION** (. . . that we might desire His will) (v. 4-5)
(God fulfills His promise of the Holy Spirit)

"Being assembled" = lit. "while eating salt with" - or more generally, "eating with."

NOTE: The Holy Spirit came because He was promised, not because He was prayed for (as Pentecostals believe).
Luke 24:49
And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

When Jesus was in the upper room before His crucifixion, he promised to send the Holy Spirit to take His place in the world (Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7).

Read John 14:15-20.

When we ask Jesus to come into our hearts, He does!--In the person of the Holy Spirit. We have Christ in us . . ."the hope of glory." We have "Immanuel" ("God with us").

It is a mystery how God is in heaven and yet in each believer! When "a man gives another [man] a piece of bread or a piece of money, he gives it away from himself and has nothing further to do with it. It is not thus with God's gift of the Holy Spirit. No, the Spirit is God. God is in the Spirit who comes to us . . . The gift of the Spirit is the most personal act of the Godhead; it is the gift of Himself unto us." (A. Murray, "Decision Magazine," May, 1986).

C. **JESUS LEFT US SPIRITUAL ABILITY** (. . . that we might do His will) (v. 6-8)
(God fills us with His power by the Holy Spirit)

Acts 1:8 is basically a brief outline of the book of Acts.

1. The witness in Jerusalem is recorded in Acts 1-7.
2. The witness in Judea & Samaria is recorded in Acts 8-12
3. The witness to the uttermost part of the earth is recorded in Acts 13-28.

Without the Holy Spirit we would have no power for witnessing.

We need Him to empower us! He is our "spiritual muscle."

The Holy Spirit enables us to speak the word with boldness (Acts 4:31); He gives power to witness (4:33); and grace to endure opposition (v. 33b).

He convicts the lost (5:33); makes witnessing effective (6:10); and He leads us to souls who are open to the Savior (8:29).

NOTE: the comparison between a drunk man and a Spirit-filled man.

Eph. 5:18 - "Be not drunk with wine . . . but be filled with the Spirit."

LK. 1:15 says of John the Baptist: "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."

In Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost, Peter said in Verses 15-17 (READ)

Lessons:
1. A drunk man is controlled by another power, so is the Spirit-filled man.
2. A drunk man acts like a different person; so does the Spirit-filled man.

EX: A man may be shy, timid, afraid of his own shadow, etc., but if he gets drunk, he gets so talkative you can't shut him up. The drunker he gets, the louder he talks. He gets bold as a lion, etc. He will attempt anything.

Another man may be shy and timid, but if he gets filled with the Holy Spirit, he will start talking out loud in front of crowds and not be embarrassed. (C. Hutson, p. 7)

Ephesians 5:18
And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;

- NOTE: It is just as wrong to be drunk as it is not to be filled with the Spirit. (Both are commands - one negative, the other positive).

If Jesus accomplished His mission in the power of the Spirit, what makes us think we can get away without the Spirit's power?

Four ways to hinder the Holy Spirit's work in your life:

1) Resisting Him - Acts 7:51 (unsaved people resist Him)

2) Quenching Him - I Th. 5:19 - "Quench not the Spirit" To quench is to put out a fire.

3) Lying to Him - Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5)

4) Grieving Him - "Grieve not the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30). To grieve is to cause the pain of sorrow because of sin.

The Holy Spirit is God's answer to:

1) Ignorance (He is our Teacher)
2) Loneliness (He is our Comforting Companion)
3) Weakness (He is our spiritual muscle, our power)

Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not a prayer request. It is a command to be obeyed! (Eph. 5:18)

Do you have a hunger for the fullness of the Holy Spirit? Are you thirsty? I mean really thirsty?

Are you tired of laboring in the flesh? Are you sick of mediocrity? have you had enough of the rut, routine, normal, "everyday Christianity"?

Then yield to God today! Confess your sin and determine to surrender your will everyday to God's control.

He has given you His Spirit. He has not left us alone. The reason we feel so lonely is not God's fault, it is our own.

We have grieved the Holy Spirit; we have quenched Him.

Most of what you think are problems in your life are not problems but symptoms. Your fighting in your home; your lack of love for God, God's children, and lost souls; your lack of joy and fruit, etc. are not problems, but symptoms of not being Spirit-filled.
The same is true of a church.

Our problem is not really lack of faithfulness, lack of giving, lack of soul-winning, or division and strife (cp. I Cor. 3:1), but it is that we need Spirit-filled believers. You don't have problems with Spirit-filled Christians.

Luke 4:14
And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

Romans 15:13
Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Romans 15:19
Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:4
And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

II. ***All believers have*** **the Power of God's <u>Gospel</u>**
(God's <u>Word</u> is Powerful)

1 Corinthians 1:18
For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Romans 1:16
For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

"Preaching" = <u>not</u> *kerux*, but *logos*. "The <u>word</u> of the cross" - i.e. "the <u>word about the cross</u>" (which can be shared by any Christian - not necessarily a preacher).

"To them that perish" - lit. to the ones who are perishing (pres. mid. part.). The lost are <u>already</u> in a state of destruction. They are already on the road to perdition. God's wrath already abides on them (Jn. 3:36).

Paul uses the present tense (<u>are</u> perishing) rather than the future tense (<u>will</u> perish) because the condition, destiny, and eternity of the lost can be altered in this life if God reaches their heart via the Gospel, and they respond in belief (v. 21).

(ILLUS: I once viewed Bible Christianity as a foolish waste of time, until God changed my mind and life).

"Foolishness" - folly, nonsense

When people mock or make fun of your message, don't be offended.

--Realize they are <u>blind</u> (Eph. 4:18)
--Realize they are <u>spiritually dead</u> (Eph. 2:1)
--Realize they are <u>ignorant</u> (I Pet. 1:14)

It is foolishness to their minds because it conflicts with their own proud ideas and thinking. (people attempt to lower God's ways so as to elevate their own).

If you view the *"preaching of the cross"* as foolishness, it is because you are on the path of destruction, you are in a state of ruin.

"Us which are saved" - "Us which are (presently) being saved (passive)"

"The power of God" - What energy, strength, or power does God use to save sinners? Answer: The power of the message of Calvary.

They can call you a "fool" and your message "foolish," but you have experienced a life-changing <u>power</u> that the world knows nothing about.

Are we the fools who have come to trust in Christ's finished work?
Or are the fools the ones attempting to work their way into God's favor and kingdom?

Are we the fools who have available to us the *"power and wisdom of God"* (v. 24)...

...To have answers to life's greatest questions

...To have personal lives that have been miraculously transformed

...To have the knowledge how to have marriages that last through thick and thin

Or are the fools the ones who hop from school of thought to school of thought. . .from book to book. . . from class to class. . . and still lack solutions to the moral, ethical, social, and spiritual problems we see every day.

You can judge a person's relationship to God on how he views the *"preaching of the cross."*

V. 19

In Isaiah 29:14, it is written that God will one day destroy the worldly viewpoints of the supposed worldly wiseman. He will throw aside the pseudo-intellectualism of the anti-Bible, anti-Christ intelligencia.

One day those who were so confident in their own ideas, so smug in their own philosophies, so reliant on their own plans, schemes, etc., will have a rude awakening after death. They will then be in the torment and anguish their own sinful, unbelieving heart deserves. They will forever regret: "I was wrong!" "I am the fool!"

--The theory of evolution will one day come crashing down.

--The thoughts that the Bible is not God's inspired, infallible, inerrant Word will be corrected.

--The disbelief in the miracles of the Bible (EX: Red Sea, Jonah, Jesus' miracles, etc.) will one day be straightened out.

2 Corinthians 4:7
But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

"Treasure" – that which is valuable and expensive

"This treasure" - the treasure is the Gospel ministry
This treasure is the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (i.e. the Gospel message – cp. 4:3).

"Earthen vessels" = clay containers

"Earthen" - made of clay, earthenware, pottery. Corinthian pottery was well known in the ancient world ((Strabo, Geography, 8:6, 23; Martin; ABD, 1:1136); Paul may have been referring to the small pottery lamps which were cheap and fragile or he may have referred to earthenware vases or urns. The point seems to be that the valuable treasure is contained in weak, fragile, and valueless containers (Hughes; SB, 3:516; NW, 2, ii:436:38; Thrall; Furnish). The ending of the word signifies material out of which something was made ((MH, 359). (Reinecker, p. 399)

"Earthen vessels" - Clay jars (our fragile human bodies).

God puts a glorious treasure inside of a weak container and pours out that treasure into the lives of others, so that in the end it is the treasure that is glorified and not the vessel.

The extraordinary power is from God and not our flesh.

Work performed in the flesh will wear us down to the bone. But work done by His power will never diminish.

To be effective in ministry, we must ask God for His power and strength every day. As Paul said: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

"Ministry takes place when divine resources flow through human channels to the glory of God" (Jack Palmer).

Acts 4:33
And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

When the saints are right with God, God's man has power in his preaching. (EX: When Jesus could do no miracles in certain places because of their unbelief).

1 Thessalonians 1:5
For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

"For" = because

Paul was sure they were saved because he remembered the <u>effectiveness</u> of the Gospel (good news) (cp. v. 3).

It touched their <u>hearts</u> and <u>wills</u>.

"Came" = lit. <u>was caused</u> (made) <u>to come</u> (passive verb). God sent it and empowered it.

"Word only" - Many traveling teachers, preachers and philosophers in Paul's day were only peddling the gospel to make money off of ignorant people (cp. 2:3-5)

Preaching that is in "word only" is dead and lifeless.

ILLUS: Some rabbi or priest that stands up and recites some dry, dusty creed or memorized prayer, etc., does nothing to change the lives of the listeners.

Romans 1:16
For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

"Power" = dynamite - explosive and sustained energy that is able to crack open any hard heart!

Have you ever seen the power of the Gospel? I have seen it change homosexuals, drunkards, drug addicts. If it can do that, should I be ashamed of it?

III. ***All believers have*** **the Power of God's <u>Armor</u>**
(God's <u>Protection</u> is Powerful)

Ephesians 6:10-11
Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Today, we are in a battle, but we cannot see the enemy. We are in a war, but we do not fire guns or missiles. We fight on a continual basis, but often do not realize it.

I Peter 5:8
Our Adversary the Devil

Every believer is a soldier and is expected to fight (there are no spiritual pacifists).

I Tim. 1:18-19; II Tim. 2:3-4

V. 10

"Be strong" - lit. be empowered (passive). Allow yourself to be endued with divine ability. Yield to the power that God alone gives.

Those who are "strong" in themselves usually are proud and independent and usually don't tap into the strength of God.

God can use weak people more than He can "strong" (I Cor. 1:27 - *"God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty"*).

Paul's thorn in the flesh caused him to depend upon God's strength and not his own.

II Cor. 12:9-10 - *"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."*

V. 11

"The whole armor" - the <u>complete</u> armor; the <u>full</u> armor (planoplian).

Having on <u>every</u> piece of armor that God commands is vitally important.

While most Christians would not dream of dressing immodestly or of leaving their house naked; many do so every day. Dressed physically but naked spiritually.

The purpose of the armor is not for "looks"; not to be spiritually "dressed up" to impress others; but it is for battle!

"Wiles" = schemes; crafty plots; deceitful tactics and maneuvers.

"The <u>whole</u> armor" **-** the complete, or full armor

(ILLUS: in football, every essential bit of protective padding is needed)

If <u>one</u> piece is missing, Satan will attack that area of vulnerability; he looks for unprotected areas of our lives, for "chinks" in our armor.

Satan has much experience (6 - 12,000 years) in knowing how to make men fall. None of us could match his intelligence. By ourselves we are no match for him.

V. 12

Our battle is not physical but spiritual. An unseen yet real conflict that is raging all around us.

"Principalities" - high rulers

"powers" - authorities

"rulers" - lit. world rulers of this (present) darkness (kosmos & kratoras).

"Spiritual wickedness in high places" - the spiritual armies of evil in the heavenlies; a reference to the demonic spirits that soar through the universe.

Three truths:

1. We can only be strong <u>in the Lord</u> (v. 10)

2. By ourselves, we are <u>no match for Satan</u> (v. 11)

3. Spiritual battles require spiritual weapons (v. 12).

Verse 12 could be describing different ranks of demonic forces (in ascending order from the least powerful to the most).

V. 13

"Wherefore" = because of the spiritual demonic armies hovering over and about us.

"Withstand" = to stand against (antistanai); to resist; to withstand is the opposite of remaining passive or of giving in to the devil; or being defeated by Him.

The only formula for getting rid of the devil is (not magical phrases or verbal formulas) but by <u>resisting</u> him (I Pet. 5:8-9; Ja. 4:7).

"the evil day" - there are specific days when Satanic activity, temptation, etc. will reach each one of us. We need to be ready for those "days of evil."

"And having done all, to stand" - After accomplishing great victories, after working hard and doing all that was right and godly, there is a tendency to become complacent, to savor the past triumphs. And then, in such times, having stood, there is a tendency toward a great fall.

"Take unto you" - this imperative requires our volition; it's a choice of our will; we must make a decisive decision to take up the virtues He mentions. It's not automatic. Otherwise, the imperative would be meaningless.

"The evil day" - a particular day when Satan's fury is aimed personally at you. There may come into you life an evil day like no other. It will be too late then to put on the armor. The time to be ready for war is before the battle starts. Before the missiles fly. Before the guns fire.

V. 14

"Stand" **-** stand firm, maintain your ground without budging or giving up any won territory to the Devil.

In verses 14-16, God gives a series of participles which unfold how we are to stand.

God is saying, *"Stand!"* Now here's how. . .

Seven pieces of armor to overcome Satan:

A. Truth is Powerful

V. 14

"Truth" -

Believe the truth
Tell the truth
Live the truth

Satan is opposite of truth; he is a liar (jn. 8). Overcome him with the truth.

Nothing is as powerful as the truth, and yet nothing is so rare. Perhaps this is what makes a man of truth so mighty. A man of truth does not wear the hypocrite's mask, nor does he have to back himself out of corners by lying to cover up lies. This chronic lying only digs a deeper and deeper pit for the one enslaved to such deception.

A liar plays right into the hands of the Father of lies, Satan.

Satan will take you down the path of deceit and hypocrisy unless you defeat him by always telling and living the truth.

Some might justify their lying by saying, "I'm not hurting anyone" or "What they don't know won't hurt them." Falsehood is never justified. Lying is so serious a sin simply because it is the opposite of the nature of God, who is "Truth." It is just as serious as any other sin.

Lying is characteristic of Satan's children, not God's. Rev. 21:8 - *"all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone which is the second death."*

B. Righteousness is Powerful

V. 14

"Righteousness" - Do Right - hymn

Chest plate covers vital organs.

NOTE: Righteousness is not merely abstaining from what is wrong, but it is positively doing what is right.

A man is not righteous simply because he does not do wrong, but because he does what is right. Righteousness should be our # 1 priority in life (Mt. 6:33 - *"Seek ye first...His righteousness..."*).

Righteousness is:

1) Being just and fair (not partial)
2) Being kind and helpful (not self-centered)
3) Being holy and pure (not defiled)

How will righteousness help you defeat Satan's attacks?

1. A righteous man's prayers get answered (James 5)

2. A righteous man's life is not cluttered with obstacles to make him stumble

3. A righteous man's life is pleasing to God and God will come to his rescue (when God isn't helping a person, it is because that person is not right with God).

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right" (Eph. 6:1) --So that you will have a:--good life and a long life

"It's never right to do wrong to do right."

"The end never justifies the means"

If the end is righteous, then the means to that end should also be righteous.

C. SPREADING THE GOSPEL IS POWERFUL

V. 15

"Feet" - cp. Is. 52:7 - "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

Rom. 10:15

"Preparation" - readiness
"Be ready always" (I Pet. 3:15).

Our "feet" are that which move us forward into battle.
The victorious Christian life is not a stagnant one, not a "sterile" one, not an uninvolved one. It is taking the offensive for God. It is a life of being busy for God. Busy about His work. God's work for you and me is His Great Commission -- *"To preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mk. 16:15; Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).

In order to conquer Satan we need to be busy "going with the Gospel." Our feet need to be bringing us to lost sinners in need of salvation.

How does witnessing (evangelism) keep us from Satan's attacks?

1) It keeps us from idleness (*"Idle hands are the devil's workshop")*
"An idle life parked at a 'red light' is a green light for Satan to come and side-swipe us."

Some of the most troublesome, disgruntled church members are those who are doing nothing in terms of evangelism.

2) It keeps us fulfilled and joy-filled (*"...fruit, that your joy may be full"*)
Depression comes when the focus of our lives is self. However, when the focus of our lives is others (when we are compassionately concerned for others and their need), depression flees.

D. BELIEVING GOD'S PROMISES IS POWERFUL

The hymn writer said: "I want to live above the world though Satan's darts at me are hurled; though some may dwell where these abound, my prayer, my aim is higher ground."

A shield is a defensive weapon; it is used to deflect the flaming arrows of the wicked one.

As Satan aims and fires his arrows of:
"Fear" - we deflect with God's promise *"Be not afraid, for I am with thee"*
"Loneliness" - we deflect with God's promise of *"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."*
Discouragement" - we deflect with God's promise of *"Your labor is not in vain in the Lord"*
"Trials and tribulation" - we deflect with God's promise of *"All things work together for good"*
"Persecution" - we deflect with God's promise of *"When you pass through the waters I will be with you..."*
"Sexual lust" - we deflect with God's promise of *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man..."*
"Faith" is the victory that overcomes the world (I Jn. 4).

E. CONFIDENCE IN SALVATION IS POWERFUL

Ex: helmets are used in golden glove boxing; NFL; construction hard hats; motorcycling etc.

One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to assure us regarding our salvation. *"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God"* (Rom. 8).

When we <u>grieve</u> Him because of sin (Eph. 4) or <u>quench</u> Him because of unbelief (I Th. 5), we forfeit His ministry of convincing our spirit that we belong to God.

Satan plagues the mind; he torments the spirit of the one who lives in continual doubt of his salvation.

Paul said, *"I <u>know</u> whom I have believed, and am <u>persuaded</u> that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."*

F. THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT IS POWERFUL

V. 17
"Sword of the Spirit" - Heb. 4:12; Rev. 19:15

The sword of the Spirit is not:
--new revelation from some self-appointed prophet

--psychiatry or secular psychology
--visions, dreams, or speaking in tongues

The weapon He uses to convict, rebuke, encourage the hearts of men is His inscripturated oracles, the Bible (Heb. 4:12 - *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.")*

A sword is an offensive and defensive weapon.

The Word of God offensively brings people to their knees so that they become captives of Jesus Christ (*"He led captivity captive").*

The Word of God defensively fights off false doctrine (Satanic distortions of God's truth).

It also defensively fights off temptations (Mt. 4 - *"It is written").*

G. PRAYER IS POWERFUL

In war times, one of the greatest tactics is to cut the lines of communication; to cut the telegraph wires; to jam and scramble the messages; to sabotage the phone lines.

Don't let Satan cut off your communication to the "Captain of the Lord's Host."

Conclusion:
Faith and Power go together (wherever you find one, you find the other)
Acts 6:8
And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.