

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 5



A GOOD SOLDIER

Scripture Texts: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5; 1 Corinthians 2:15-20; 2 Corinthians 4:1-9; 2 Timothy 2:3-4; 1 Peter 4:10-11

The world needs a church that has contact with God, living truth, and power. Much is called the church that is not the church. If we have not a supernatural church, we have no church at all. If God is not moving in a people, they are not the Church of God. His power in the church is evidenced by changed lives and answered prayers. Life is there. The early church was a powerful church moved by God. When God shakes off the imitations and the dust clears away, the true church will still be standing firm in Him.

MEMORY VERSE: *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 1:8

Christ, the Power and Wisdom of God

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 Paul had come to Corinth declaring the Gospel of Christ. Now, writing later, he said he **came not with excellency of speech . . . wisdom . . . or enticing words.** Even though Paul was an educated man, he did not display his learning in his preaching. Instead, he came in weakness, fear and trembling. Why? Knowledge of Jesus and Him crucified is greater than any knowledge. The **demonstration of the Spirit and of power** is greater than anything **man's wisdom** can do. Paul cast aside his own doing that God might work mightily through him. The faith of the people must not be based upon the wisdom of men—Paul's reasoning powers, the drawing power of his personality, his knowledge. Their faith must be in the power of God—in what they saw God doing in Paul and others and especially in the work they felt Him doing in their own hearts. Faith in anything else could be shaken by opposite reasoning, a stronger personality, superior knowledge, or the discouragements of Satan.

We need power greater than human power to live and work for God and to be good soldiers to meet Satan's opposition. We receive the needed power from the baptism of the Holy Spirit. All we do must be done by God through us, not by us, ourselves.

Power by the Grace of God

1 Corinthians 15:10 Each of us has (1) a life to live, (2) a work to do, and (3) opposition to meet. The LIFE is to be yielded to Christ for redemption and lived to glorify God. The WORK is to take the Gospel of Christ to all people. The OPPOSITION is Satan's constant attempt to destroy our LIFE and prevent our WORK from being effective. He will use all means, from common temptation and trial to the fiercest persecution. That we may carry out these three charges, God has provided an almighty Saviour, a true Gospel, a perfect salvation, and the power to do what these require.

Three times in this Scripture Paul spoke of the grace of God. First, that grace—the free bestowal of God's life and gifts upon him—made him the man he was, gave him purity of heart and talents, and called him to be an apostle. Secondly, God's grace was the source and power producing all the accomplishments of Paul's life—the souls saved, churches established, miracles wrought, and healings done (**Matthew 9:6-8**). Thirdly, lest some credit these to Paul's own working, he emphasized—yet not I, but the grace of God. This is witnessed by what Paul was in his own strength.

2 Corinthians 4:1-9 We have this treasure—this ministry . . . **handling the word of God**, the commission to preach the Gospel—in **earthen vessels**—in human bodies and minds, compared to containers of clay, easily broken. We have power to tell men the truth even when personal harm may be at stake, when men oppose it

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(Micah 3:8; Romans 1:16). God uses such so **that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.** Being human, the servant may be **troubled . . . perplexed. . . persecuted . . . cast down.** But because God is given freedom to work, the servant is **not distressed . . . not in despair . . . not forsaken . . . not destroyed.**

Peter and the other disciples presented a sorry picture of fear and defeat at Christ's crucifixion. Afterward they bravely met threats, beatings, prison, and death. What made the difference? They had been baptized with the Holy Spirit. **Perfect love casteth out fear (1 John 4:18).** We can have the same power by having Him Who is power. There is no other way. We cannot imitate Him. We must have Him within by being saved from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ, and by yielding all to God to use as He will, and opening the heart for His Spirit's entrance.

The Power to Endure

In our memory verse today, Jesus, just before leaving the world, repeated His promise of power to His disciples. This power was so necessary to their future life and work that they must not leave Jerusalem until they had it. This is the power we have been reading about today. All the apostles received it before starting their work. We must also.

2 Timothy 2:3-4 A good soldier of Jesus must endure hard things. He must be in good spiritual shape. As a natural soldier must have disruption of his family life, his daily routine, and lifestyle, so must we as good soldiers of Christ. A good soldier of God does not become so entangled with the affairs of this life that he cannot get loose to please Him Who has chosen him to be a soldier. Saints must be careful not to become entangled with legitimate things that are necessary in our everyday living.

1 Peter 4:10-11 As every man hath received the gift—the gift of the Spirit, the spiritual ability to do our part of God's work—**minister the same one to another**—do that work and so bless others. We are only **stewards** of the **grace of God.** We only hold these powers and gifts in trust. Whatever we do we must do **as of the ability which God giveth,** not our own. We must abase ourselves and exalt God—**that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.** Nothing less than the power of the Holy Spirit is sufficient for these things. This was Peter's experience. It can be yours.

JUST A THOUGHT

There can be but one truth.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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