

Series: Ephesians

Title: His Power to Quicken and Convert

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**Ephesians 1: 15: Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16: Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19: And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20: Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, 21: Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, 23: Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.**

, **our subject will be:** His Power to Quicken and Convert.

It was not merely God's power that Paul desired for them to know. It is the exceeding greatness of his power "to usward who believe."

**Proposition:** The exceeding greatness of power that God works mightily to quicken and convert a sinner to faith in Christ is the same mighty power God worked when he raised Christ from the dead and gave him all this glory.

**Divisions:** We will see that the exceeding greatness of power that regenerated and converted us is the same as that power that raised Christ from the dead by comparing: 1) Our Deaths; 2) Our Obstacles; 3) The Means Used; 4) The Effects Produced

## **I. FIRST, LET'S COMPARE OUR DEATHS.**

### **The Death of Christ Was Real Death**

When the Lord Jesus lay in the tomb there was absolutely no life in his body. (**John 19**) The work of declaring God just and of Justifying God's people on the cross was the most important event that has ever taken place in the history of this world—think of that! There have been some enormously important events take place in history—but none as important, none as necessary, as what took place on that cross over 2000 years ago.

Christ had to bear the sins of his people in his own body on the tree to manifest the righteousness of God. For God to be just in pouring out divine judgment on Christ in place of his people, the LORD had to lay on him the iniquity of all his people. He had all the sins and trespasses of his elect people put upon him

If the fit man who led the scape goat into the wilderness had to be washed because ceremonially, in type, he was unclean by his contact with the scapegoat—then we know that Christ really bore our sins in his own body on the tree because Christ is not the shadow, but the express image of that one foreshadowed in the scapegoat.

His bearing the sin of his people in his body was as real as Christ bearing the punishment for his people. Therefore, Christ Jesus the Son of God really did give up the Ghost and die. No man took his life, he laid it down of himself and he had power to raise it up again. But his death was real.

His bearing our sin was real; his bearing our punishment was real; his declaring God just was real; his satisfying justice for us was real. Because when Christ Jesus really did die, the old man of sin in each of his elect really died. Let me show you the reality of what took place on the cross:

John 19:30: When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. 31: The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. 32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs; 34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. 35 And he that saw *it* bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. [Truly this was the Son of God.] 36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. 37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced. 38 And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. 39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. 40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. 42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation *day*; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

So we see there was absolutely no life in our Savior's body when he was laid in the tomb.

### The Death of His People was Real Death

Likewise, there was absolutely no spiritual life in us before regeneration—**Ephesians 2: 1: And you *hath* he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;**

Brethren, we had none of the spiritual senses that make up spiritual life which we now have:

- No eyes to see Christ
- No ears to hear his Voice
- No hands to lay hold of the skirt of his garment
- No feet to be led of the Spirit of God
- No nose to smell the sweet smelling savor of Christ's offering
- No heart to beat after Christ
- No tongue to confess our sins and beg mercy of him
- No inward hunger and thirst after righteousness.

We were totally, thoroughly, completely dead in sin.

**Application:** Imagine a preacher at a funeral, saying to the corpse in the casket, "God wants to save you if you will just let him. If you take the first step God will do the rest." It is no less absurd for a preacher to say that to men and women, dead in trespasses and in sins. Sinners can do nothing to be born again.

### New Birth, New Creation

The new birth is a creation which is entirely the work of God alone. No man has ever created anything; God alone has power to create a new man within these bodies of death. God does not use parts of us that already existed. He creates something which before was not there—a new man. Regeneration is a new creation.

Ephesians 2:10: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus...

Ephesians 4:24: And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Colossians 3:10: And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

2 Corinthians 5: 17: Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 18: And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

The exceeding greatness of his mighty power is effectual, irresistible, none can stop him from doing this work. Christ told Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...just as the wind blows where it will, so the Spirit of God blows where it will.” (John 3: 3) Each of God’s elect shall be born again and given faith to believe on Christ.

John 6: 37: All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

So first of all, we see that we were dead like as Christ was dead. God receives the glory for regenerating his children to life. **Ephesians 2: 1: And you hath HE QUICKENED, who were dead in trespasses and sins;**

John 1: 13: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

## II. SECONDLY, LET’S COMPARE OUR OBSTACLES (Matthew 27)

### A Stone and Armed Guards

Guarding Christ’s tomb was a stone sealed in place, along with armed guards to make sure Christ’s body would never leave that tomb.

Matthew 27: 62: Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, 63: Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. 64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. 65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. 66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

Likewise, believer, a stone was sealed, keeping us in our grave—our own stony hearts. While in that state, if the word of God came to us we did like those of old,

Zechariah 7: 11: But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears that they should not hear. 12: Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.

Our hard hearts had no understanding of our sin, no understanding of the true and living God and his Christ, and we had no desire to know, the gospel was foolishness to us.

1 Corinthians 2:14: But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

We not only had no spiritual discernment, we actively pursued all things ungodly--**Ephesians 2: 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world**, [Our affections were totally set on things of this earth]...**3: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;** [“the desires of our mind” were those dreams we followed after, deceived,

thinking we could find lasting value in this world] **and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.** [Full of enmity against God, full of pride, unbelief, and self-righteousness, with the wrath of God abiding on us.]

In addition to the stone, there were **armed guards** standing watch over Christ's tomb to prevent him from being raised. Likewise, we had plenty of armed guards around us as well.

The devil himself—**Ephesians 2: 2: We walked...according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:** Every unregenerate, unbelieving, disobedient child of Adam is guarded by Satan. (2 Tim 2: 26; Heb 2: 15) We were entirely THE DUPES OF SATAN, the strongman—the spirit that now works in those here who have not repented from their sins and believed on Christ. The Lord Jesus made Paul an apostle, to preach the gospel for this purpose:

Acts 26: 18: To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from THE POWER OF SATAN UNTO GOD, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Also, we were guarded by our worldly friends and family. They urged us not to get too involved with the gospel.

Some of us were just the opposite: but we had false preachers and vainly religious friends guarding us to make sure we continued living among the dead. A false profession in religion is so deadly.

Matthew 23:15: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

**Illustration:** Most preachers are sculptors. They take a sinner and they chisel here. Cut there. Sand down this part. Hammer and saw and form and sculpt. (Isaiah 41: 6-7) Until they've made a man look like a godly man—but he is only a statue. a "form of godliness."

2 Timothy 3:5: Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

**Illustration:** Near Knoxville, the Tennessee River flows southward but near Jackson, it runs north. Yet, even though it has changed directions, it is still the same old muddy water.

When a sinner turns his life around himself, gets baptized, joins the church, does good works, cuts his hair, trims his sideburns, throws away his music collection and engages in a frenzy of church activities though he is zealous and sincere, though the preacher calls it "a work of grace", it is the same muddy water flowing in a different direction.

Outward reformation is not regeneration. A new lifestyle is not a new nature. An outward form of holiness is not sanctification of the Spirit. To have the form without the power is to be worse off than before—for then a man thinks he has life, when he is still dead.

**Be sure to hear this:** The single greatest problem with self-made religious men and women is this:

Matthew 22: 29: Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

It takes the exceeding greatness of God's effectual, irresistible power by which he raised Christ from the grave, to create life within a dead, stony hearted, guarded sinner.

**Christ is that Power and Wisdom of God**

When he cast devils out of a certain man on the Sabbath day, the Pharisees accused him of doing it by the devil. Christ said,

Matthew 12: 28: But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29: Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

It took nothing less than God himself taking our flesh, taking the sin of his people in his own body, to suffer the divine justice his people deserved, to purge the sin of his people and put an end to death for us—that was the binding of the devil.

Hebrews 2:14: Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

And it takes nothing less than the exceeding greatness of his power working WITHIN his child to overcome the stony heart and the powers and principalities guarding that captive sinner. This is the power of God that those with a form of godliness deny! Because sadly, they know nothing of it!

### III. THIRDLY, LET'S COMPARE THE MEANS GOD USED (Matthew 28)

#### An Angel with a Message

God sent an angel with a message to the tomb of our Savior.

Matthew 28: 1: In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. 2: And, behold, there was a great EARTHQUAKE: FOR the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and ROLLED back the STONE from the door, and SAT upon it. 3: His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: 4: And for fear of him the KEEPERS did shake, and became as DEAD *men*. 5: And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. 6: He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7: And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

Likewise, at the set time, in the exceeding greatness of his mighty power, Christ sends a messenger—a preacher—to his lost child.

**Illustration:** Think of the obstacles that he overcomes to do that: it is a long, winding road, over 14 years long, from south Arkansas to central New Jersey.

Christ first fills his preacher with the treasure of his gospel riches—that gospel “is the power of God unto salvation.” (Rom 1: 16) But the preacher has no power to work effectually in the hearts of his hearers. He is no match for the stony heart, no match for Satan, the strongman, no match for the host of armed guards surrounding a sinner. But in God's wisdom, there is a reason his preacher has no power to work effectually.

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.

#### Power is of God

The exceeding great effectual power is of God, of Christ our King, of the Holy Spirit. As his gospel goes forth, the Holy Spirit creates a great earthquake like when Christ was raised. He rolls away our stony heart and sits upon

it—subduing our old stubborn fleshly man. He overcomes all who guarded us, making them to become as dead men.

God works mightily, effectually in the exceeding greatness of his power to create a new heart—**Ephesians 2: 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved);**

Ezekiel 11:19: And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh.

In that new heart that he made, for the first time he convinces us:

- **“of sin: because we believed not on the Lord Jesus Christ.”**—He convinced us we died in Adam, that our best works were all sin, that WE were sin, we were convinced our chief sin was not believing God’s word concerning his Son, Christ Jesus—we were **“without Christ, without hope, without God in this world.”** (John 16: 9; Eph 2: 12)
- **Convinced of righteousness:** we heard the same good news they heard at Christ’s tomb, “Fear not. Jesus Christ is risen! He has gone before you into glory! And because God received him, it means God accepted his sacrifice; the work of redemption is accomplished. Christ is our Righteousness.”
- **Convinced of judgment:** we beheld that Christ had put away all our sin, that there was now no condemnation to us because God had put us in Christ Jesus. Satan who once ruled us, was cast out, and Christ now had dominion over us.

And by the exceeding greatness of his power, God gave us the gift of faith, purging our conscious from dead works—**Ephesians 2: 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus...**

Having cast all our care upon Christ, God gave his verdict in our conscience: made the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, justified from all sin, forgiven...**Ephesians 2: 13:...now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.**

Paul says this is **Eph 1: 19: the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20: Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,...**

Paul knew because he was quickened and converted the same way you and I were.

Ephesians 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

1 Tim. 1: 12: He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, I that was before a persecutor and blasphemer; and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was exceeding abundant.

#### **IV. LASTLY, LET’S COMPARE A FEW FRUITS OF THIS POWER—**

##### **Christ Sat Down**

When Christ ascended to the Father he sat down because our high priest finished the work of perfecting forever them that are sanctified. Likewise, the first thing the believer does when God brings us to rest in Christ our Righteousness is to cease from our works of trying to earn acceptance with God by the law.

Hebrews 4: 10: For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

### **Raised to Die No More**

Christ was raised to die no more,

Romans 6: 9:...Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10: For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Likewise, each of us born of the exceeding greatness of his power, shall die no more.

John 11: 25: Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

### **Walk in Newness of Life**

Like as Christ now lives unto God, so do we who believe.

Romans 6: 4:...like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life....11: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Bear Witness of Christ**

Christ is Head over his body the fullness of him and he is filling all in all. He does so partly by sending us forth as his witnesses to declare Christ and his finished work. So our great work here on earth is to bear witness of Christ as he is revealed in the scriptures.

Whatever we are doing, as unto the Lord, the ultimate end should be to promote his gospel—for his glory and his people's good. **V10: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.**

Ephesians 4: 1: I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2: With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3: Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace....29: Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30: And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31: Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you 5: 1: Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; 2: And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

**Amen!**