

“A Powerful Man”

Summary

This powerful message confronts us with a paradox that lies at the heart of authentic Christian living: true power flows from weakness. Drawing from Mark's Gospel where the disciples ask 'What manner of man is this?' after Jesus calms the storm, we're invited to examine the nature of Christ's power and how it operates in our lives. The sermon reveals that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power, but this power was inseparable from His crucified life—His constant surrender of His own will to the Father's. We're challenged to recognize that God is bringing us to the end of ourselves, not as punishment, but as preparation. The message unpacks Acts 1:8, showing that the power we receive when the Holy Spirit comes upon us isn't raw, unregulated force, but power governed by relationship with God. Through the sobering account of Simon the sorcerer in Acts 8, we see how motive matters when it comes to power—God won't entrust His power to those seeking their own glory. The revolutionary insight is this: weakness is actually the currency of heaven. When we come to God with our inadequacies, insecurities, and limitations, we're actually rich in what matters most. Isaiah 40 promises that those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength, but the Hebrew word for 'renew' means to pierce, cut off, or abolish—God exchanges our human strength for His divine power. This isn't about becoming impressive in our own right; it's about becoming vessels through which God's power flows unhindered.

Small Group Study Guide – A Powerful Man

Small Group Guide: What Manner of Man Is This? - A Man of Power

Opening Prayer

Begin by asking God to help your group understand true power and to examine your hearts regarding motives and dependency on the Holy Spirit.

Ice Breaker

Share a time when you felt completely out of your depth or powerless in a situation. How did you respond?

Key Takeaways

1. **Jesus was a man of power** - anointed by the Holy Spirit and entrusted with power because His heart and motives were pure.
 2. **Power must be regulated by relationship** - Power without relationship with the Holy Spirit is dangerous. God gives power to those who can be trusted with it.
 3. **Weakness is the currency of heaven** - God gives power to the weak, not the strong. Our weaknesses position us to receive God's strength.
 4. **Power comes through crucified living** - Daily dying to self, surrendering our will, and living as "martyrs" (witnesses) enables us to carry God's power safely.
 5. **Motive matters with power** - Why we want power and for whom we want it determines whether God can entrust us with it.
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Discussion Questions

Understanding Power (15-20 minutes)

1. **Acts 1:8 & Acts 10:38** - How does the sermon describe the connection between the Holy Spirit and power? Why can't we have one without the other?
2. Pastor Rob mentioned that "power must be useful, not dangerous." What are some examples of power being used dangerously in ministry or Christian circles? What makes power "useful" in God's kingdom?
3. Read the story of Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:9-24). What was wrong with Simon's desire for power? How can we examine our own motives when we desire God's power?

Weakness and Strength (15-20 minutes)

4. The sermon emphasized that "when I'm weak, then I'm strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10). How does this contradict our natural thinking? Why is this principle so important?
5. Pastor Rob said, "Weakness is messy." What do you think he meant by this? Why are we so reluctant to let others see our weaknesses and struggles?
6. **1 Corinthians 2:1-5** - Paul determined "not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" and came "in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling." What would it look like for us to adopt this same posture in our daily lives?

The Crucified Life (15-20 minutes)

7. The sermon connected power to living a "crucified life" - daily dying to self and surrendering our will. What are some practical, everyday examples of what this looks like?
8. Read John 5:30. Jesus said, "I can of My own self do nothing." If Jesus, who was God in flesh, chose to live in complete dependence on the Father, what does that say about how we should live?

9. Pastor Rob shared his dream about "weakness is messy, but when I'm weak, then I'm strong. And I want to live in that strength." What would change in your life if you truly embraced this principle?

Power for Purpose (10-15 minutes)

10. **Deuteronomy 8:17-18** teaches that God gives us power to get wealth "that He may establish His covenant." How does this challenge our understanding of why God blesses us or gives us power?
11. The sermon mentioned that our generation needs "a new tractor" - appropriate power for our assignment. What do you think is the assignment of the Church in this hour? What kind of power do we need?

Personal Reflection (5-10 minutes)

Take a few minutes of silence for each person to consider:

- **Where am I trying to operate in my own strength rather than God's power?**
- **What weaknesses am I hiding or ashamed of that God might want to use?**
- **What are my true motives when I desire to be used by God?**
- **Am I willing to be "weak" so that God can be strong through me?**

Practical Applications

Choose 1-2 of these to commit to this week:

1. **Honest Inventory** - Write down areas where you feel weak or inadequate. Instead of seeing these as disqualifications, present them to God as "currency" to exchange for His strength.
2. **Motive Check** - Before serving, ministering, or even praying for someone this week, pause and ask yourself: "Why am I doing this? Is this about me or about Jesus?"
3. **Embrace Weakness** - Share one area of struggle or weakness with a trusted friend or this small group. Practice being "messy" and authentic rather than maintaining an image of having it all together.
4. **Daily Surrender** - Each morning this week, pray: "Jesus, I can do nothing of myself. I surrender my will, my plans, and my strength to You. Fill me with Your Spirit and Your power for this day."
5. **Study Dependency** - Read through the Gospel of John this week, noting every time Jesus speaks about His dependency on the Father. Journal about what you learn.
6. **Power Audit** - Examine areas where you've been given influence, authority, or "power" (at work, in family, in ministry). Are you stewarding these in a way that points to Jesus or to yourself?

Closing Prayer Points

- Pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit on your group and church
- Ask God to reveal any impure motives regarding power or influence
- Pray for grace to live in weakness and dependency on God
- Ask for the courage to be authentic about struggles and weaknesses
- Pray for God's power to accomplish His purposes in this generation

For Next Week

Read **2 Corinthians 12:1-10** (Paul's thorn in the flesh) and come prepared to discuss how God's power is perfected in weakness.

Main Points – A Powerful Man

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the paradoxical nature of Kingdom power, emphasizing that true spiritual authority comes not from human strength but from weakness surrendered to God. Building on the series "What Manner of Man Is This?" the message examines Jesus as a man of power who operated through complete dependence on the Holy Spirit and willing weakness. Pastor Rob challenges the congregation to reject self-reliance and embrace a crucified lifestyle where power flows through relationship with the Holy Spirit rather than human ability. The core truth presented is that God entrusts power only to those who have been regulated by the Holy Spirit, whose motives have been purified, and who live as "martyrs" (witnesses) - dead to their own agendas. The sermon calls believers to recognize that weakness is actually the currency of heaven, and that God gives power to the weak, not the strong. This message confronts the modern church's tendency to rely on human wisdom, eloquence, and strength while calling for a return to Spirit-empowered ministry that flows from humility and dependence on God.

Key Points:

- Jesus was a man of power, anointed by the Holy Spirit, who could be entrusted with power because His heart was pure
- Power must be regulated by relationship with the Holy Spirit or it becomes dangerous
- The Greek word for "witnesses" (martus) means martyrs - those who die to themselves
- Motive matters when it comes to power; God examines the heart before releasing power
- True power comes "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord"
- Jesus was crucified through weakness, yet lives by the power of God
- Paul determined to come in weakness, fear, and trembling so that faith would rest in God's power, not human wisdom
- Weakness is the currency of heaven - God gives power to the weak and increases strength to those who have no might
- Those who wait on (are entangled with) the Lord will renew their strength, which means God destroys our strength to replace it with His
- God gives power to get wealth so that He may establish His covenant, not for personal glory
- The church needs power appropriate to its assignment, like upgrading from an inadequate tractor to one that can handle the job

Scripture Reference:

- Mark 4:35-41 (Jesus calming the storm - "What manner of man is this?")
- Acts 10:38 (God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and with power)
- Acts 1:8 (You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you)
- Acts 8:9-24 (Simon the sorcerer trying to buy the power of the Holy Spirit)
- Romans 8:28-29 (Predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ)
- John 5:30 (Jesus: "I can of my own self do nothing")

- 2 Corinthians 13:4 (He was crucified in weakness, yet lives by the power of God)
- 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 (Paul came in weakness, not with eloquent wisdom)
- Zechariah 4:6 ("Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit")
- Isaiah 40:28-31 (He gives power to the weak; those who wait on the Lord renew their strength)
- Ephesians 6:10 (Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might)
- Deuteronomy 8:17-18 (God gives power to get wealth to establish His covenant)

Discussion Questions – A Powerful Man

How does the concept of weakness as currency in heaven challenge our cultural understanding of strength and success, and where in your life might God be asking you to bring your weaknesses to His counter?

Pastor Rob mentioned that experienced fishermen couldn't fix their problem and had to wake a sleeping Savior. When have you reached the end of your own expertise and been forced to turn to Jesus?

What is the difference between power that comes from relationship with the Holy Spirit versus power gained through manipulation, influence, or human effort, and which are you more tempted to pursue?

The sermon states that God is bringing all people to the end of themselves because it's the hour of His glory. How does this perspective change the way you view your current struggles or limitations?

Simon wanted to buy the power of the Holy Spirit to build his own ministry. How can we examine our own motives to ensure we're seeking God's power for His purposes rather than our own advancement?

Jesus said He could do nothing of His own self, modeling complete dependence on the Father. What would it look like for you to live with this same level of surrender in your daily decisions?

Pastor Rob shared that Paul determined not to know anything except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. What expertise, credentials, or strengths might you need to intentionally set aside to operate in God's power?

How does the idea that we were born with a unique assignment requiring power challenge you to reconsider what you thought your life purpose was, and what cross might you need to carry to fulfill it?

The dream about weakness being messy suggests that true vulnerability means people will see our flaws and stumblings. What keeps you from being authentically weak before others, and what might change if you embraced that messiness?

Deuteronomy warns against saying our own power gained us wealth, reminding us that God gives power to establish His covenant. How does this principle apply to the blessings and successes you've experienced in your own life?

Scriptures – A Powerful Man

Scripture References from the Sermon

Explicitly Mentioned References:

1. **Mark 4:35-41** - The storm on the sea and Jesus calming it (the foundational passage for the series)
2. **Mark 4:41** - "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"
3. **Acts 10:38** - "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power"
4. **Acts 1:8** - "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you"
5. **Romans 8:28-29** - "All things work together for good... predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son"
6. **Revelation 13:8** - Jesus as "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world"
7. **Acts 8:9-24** - The account of Simon the Sorcerer
8. **Zechariah 4:6** - "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts"
9. **John 5:30** - "I can of my own self do nothing"
10. **2 Corinthians 13:4** - "For though he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by the power of God"
11. **2 Corinthians 13:5** - "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith"
12. **Galatians 2:20** - "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God"
13. **1 Corinthians 2:1-5** - Paul's determination to know nothing except Christ crucified
14. **Ephesians 6:10** - "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might"
15. **Isaiah 40:28-31** - "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength"
16. **Deuteronomy 8:17-18** - "You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth"

Alluded to References:

17. **Matthew 16:24-25 / Mark 8:34-35 / Luke 9:23-24** - Taking up your cross daily and following Jesus
18. **John 1:3** - "By Him all things were made that were made"
19. **1 John 3:2** - "When we see him as he is, we will become like him"
20. **Isaiah 55:1** - "Come you who have no money and buy"
21. **2 Corinthians 12:9-10** - "When I am weak, then I am strong"
22. **Matthew 6:10 / Luke 11:2** - "Not my will, but your will" (from the Lord's Prayer context)

Devotional – A Powerful Man

Day 1: The Currency of Heaven

Reading: 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Devotional: The apostle Paul discovered a revolutionary truth: God's power is perfected in our weakness. We live in a culture that celebrates strength, competence, and self-sufficiency. Yet heaven operates on a different economy—one where weakness is the currency that purchases divine power. When Paul pleaded for his thorn to be removed, God's response wasn't healing but grace: "My strength is made perfect in weakness." This isn't about celebrating dysfunction or avoiding growth; it's about recognizing that our inadequacies create space for God's adequacy. Today, instead of hiding your weaknesses or compensating for them, bring them honestly before God. Your struggles with insecurity, fear, or insufficiency aren't disqualifications—they're your richest assets in heaven's economy.

Reflection: What weakness have you been trying to hide or overcome in your own strength? How might God want to display His power through that very area?

Day 2: Regulated Power

Reading: Acts 1:4-8

Devotional: Power without relationship is dangerous. Jesus promised His disciples power, but notice the regulating factor: "when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." The power wasn't separated from the Source. Like electricity that must be stepped down and regulated to be useful rather than destructive, God's power flows through relationship with Him. Simon the sorcerer wanted power for personal platform and influence, but Peter rebuked him because his heart wasn't right. Today's church needs more than raw power—we need Holy Spirit-regulated, relationship-governed power that serves God's purposes rather than our egos. The question isn't whether we want power, but why we want it and for whom. God entrusts power to those who remain connected to Him, who live as martyrs and witnesses, constantly surrendering their own agendas.

Reflection: Examine your motives. Do you want spiritual power to build your own reputation or to establish God's covenant? What needs to change in your heart?

Day 3: Crucified Before Crucifixion

Reading: John 5:19-30

Devotional: Jesus' most stunning statement might be this: "I can of my own self do nothing." The Son of God, who spoke galaxies into existence, chose to live in complete dependence on the Father. He was crucified in heart long before He was crucified on the cross. This daily death—"not my will, but Yours"—positioned Him for the anointing and power that flowed through His ministry. We want the miracles without the surrender, the authority without the yielding, the power without the cross. But there is no resurrection without death, no power without sacrifice, no strength without weakness. Living crucified means constantly laying down our preferences, our plans, our need for control and recognition. It means choosing weakness as a lifestyle, determining like Paul to know nothing except Christ and Him crucified.

Reflection: What part of your will are you still clinging to? What would it look like to live "crucified" in that area today?

Day 4: Waiting for Renewal

Reading: Isaiah 40:28-31

Devotional: The Hebrew word for "renew" in Isaiah 40:31 means to pierce, cut off, abolish, or exchange. This isn't the gentle refreshing we imagine when we think of renewal. God doesn't merely add His strength to ours—He destroys our strength to replace it with His. Those who wait on the Lord, who become entangled and entwined with Him, experience this radical exchange. We exhaust ourselves trying to prop up our own strength, relying on our wisdom, our resources, our strategies. But God says, "Give me that weakness. Let me cut off your self-reliance so I can give you Mine." The youth will faint, the strong will stumble, but those who abandon their own might and wait on God will mount up with wings like eagles. This isn't passive waiting—it's active dependence, choosing daily to lean into God rather than ourselves.

Reflection: Where are you weary from trying to sustain your own strength? What would it mean to let God destroy it and exchange it for His?

Day 5: Not by Might

Reading: Zechariah 4:1-10

Devotional: Zerubbabel faced an impossible task: rebuilding the temple with limited resources and loud opposition. The mountain of obstacles seemed insurmountable. God's answer? "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit." The task before us—whether building a ministry, raising a family, overcoming addiction, or fulfilling our calling—requires more than human strength. It requires Holy Spirit power. And that power comes not to the confident and capable, but to those who recognize their need. God gives power to the weak, strength to those who have no might. The great mountain becomes a plain not through our striving but through His Spirit. Today, you may face your own mountain—financial need, relational conflict, spiritual opposition. Don't try

to move it in your own strength. Instead, declare over it: "Grace, grace, grace!" God's unmerited favor and power will accomplish what you cannot.

Reflection: What mountain are you facing? Are you trying to move it in your own strength, or are you positioning yourself to receive God's power through weakness and dependence?

Closing Prayer: Father, teach us to live in the strength that comes from weakness. Help us to determine in our hearts not to lean on our own understanding, eloquence, or abilities, but to wait on You. Exchange our strength for Yours. Regulate the power You give us through intimate relationship with Your Holy Spirit. May our lives demonstrate that You alone are the source of true power, and may everything we do establish Your covenant and bring glory to Your name. Amen.