

Thank Dad for the opportunity to speak

WALKING IN POWER

When I make a statement like this, you would assume that all of us have the same definition of what power is, but that's not true. Each of us have our own definition of what we perceive power to be.

For some of us, power means being the boss. For others, power is being comfortable in our own skin, or being in charge of our lives. In either case, we know that having power means possessing something that enables us to do things that we normally couldn't on our own.

In the church, when we talk about power we are typically talking about the power of God in our lives. But for me personally, I've experienced some confusion when it comes to understanding power of God.

What does it actually mean to walk in the power of God? Does it mean that you gain the strength of Samson? Or does it mean that like Elijah, you can call down fire from the sky? What does it mean for the believer to walk in the power of God so they can be victorious in this life?

In our time together we will see how we can walk in the power of God by looking at three spiritual truths from Mark 9:14-29.

- Apply What you've been taught
- Small faith is enough faith
- Spiritual formulas don't work

My hope is that as we look at these truths that God will help us understand how we can access His power for our daily lives.

Before we jump in, let's get some background, on our text.....

Background: In the verses prior, Jesus was on a mountain, which according to scripture is called “The mount of transfiguration”. He was there with Peter, James, and John, His inner circle. On this mountain, Jesus allowed these three disciples to get a glimpse of His full glory. After that experience they came down from the mountain and stepping into a chaotic situation.

This brings us to our first point....

Apply what you've been taught V14-19

Have you ever been the last one to join a conversation? Where you don't know what people are talking about or what's going on? That is kind of how Jesus and his three disciples come upon this situation. When they got to the bottom of the mountain, they saw a huge crowd of people encircling the other nine disciples and they heard a loud commotion.

Before Jesus went up the mountain with Peter, James, and John, he put the other disciples in charge of ministering to the people, while He was gone. **When Jesus got back from the mountain, it was evident that the other nine disciples had lost control of the situation, and the scribes were publicly arguing with them**

- **Who are the scribes?** The Scribes were basically experts of the religious Law, like the Ten Commandments. They were jealous of Jesus, and repeatedly tried to discredit Him but were unsuccessful.
 - **Why this moment is significant,** is because Jesus wasn't there to defend the disciples, and so the Scribes saw this as an opportune moment to publicly discredit the ministry of Jesus and His disciples.

We aren't told specifically what is being argued about, but we know that there's a captive audience, because of the crowd. When Jesus made it down the mountain, the crowd saw Him and ran to him and greeted Him.

In verse 15 it says that the crowd was “greatly amazed”, meaning that when they saw Jesus, they were basically freaking out, like people do when they see a celebrity. The people were very familiar with what Jesus could do, so everywhere He went, people wanted to be around Him

When Jesus got there, you can imagine the crowd getting quiet in anticipation of what Jesus was about to do. When Jesus approached the Scribes He asked them, *“what are you discussing with them”?*

- The interesting thing is, that none of the Scribes spoke up. I believe it's because they knew they were in trouble, so they said nothing to Jesus.

As everyone was waiting for the response of the Scribes, a man broke the silence. The man that spoke up was the father of a boy who was being possessed by a demon. He had journeyed with his son to the last known location of Jesus and His disciples, because he wanted to have the demon cast out of his son.

- **This was a common thing during Jesus earthly ministry.** People would travel from all around, just so they could bring their loved ones to Jesus so that He could heal them.
 - Sometimes it was a physical healing and other times it was a spiritual healing from demonic oppression

The “mute spirit”, that the father is talking about, is a demon that was possessing his son. **(As we will see in our text)** this demon would possess the boy, because it wanted to kill him. It would take control of the boy's body, and cause him to throw himself violently to the ground, in open fires, or in water.

- The truth is, demon possession is very real, and when someone is possessed by a demon, they lose control of themselves to the demon.

Fortunately, because of what Jesus did on the cross, those that believe in Him, cannot be demon possessed, because they are already filled with the Holy Spirit. 1 John 4:4 says - greater is He that is in you, than He (the enemy) that is in the world.

- As great as this is, the situation we are looking at is prior to the cross, and it provided a particularly difficult situation for Jesus disciples.

The difficult situation was that when the father had finally arrived Jesus wasn't there, but only the other 9 disciples. So naturally, the father assumed, if he can't get to Jesus, His disciples are the “next best thing”, but the problem was that they couldn't cast the demon out of his son.

You can imagine how disappointed, and hopeless this father must have felt when he realized that the disciples were ineffective against this demon that was tormenting his son.

- In fact, as we look at the scripture, we can assume that this is what the scribes were arguing with the disciples about.

The question then becomes, Did the disciples have power to cast out the demon? Yes, in Mark 6, Jesus had empowered his disciples to heal people and cast out demons. **So, what went wrong?** Jesus gives us the answer why the disciples couldn't cast out the Demon. **(Read Verse 19 again)**

- This is one of those places in scripture, where we see Jesus expressing frustration. He not only rebukes the disciples, but everyone involved, by saying O' faithless generation". This sounds harsh, but there's context to what Jesus is saying.

As we look in the gospels it is obvious that Jesus had a reputation of teaching powerful lessons to the crowds and His disciples, but sometimes His disciples didn't grasp the understanding of what Jesus was trying to teach them. Not because they were unable to learn, but because they didn't apply what Jesus was teaching them.

- Now before we go thinking Jesus is a "mean teacher", we need to understand that Jesus' frustration is valid here. **Why?** Because after everything the disciples had seen Jesus do, and even after Jesus gave them authority over demons they still operated out of "unbelief".

When we read things like this about the disciples it's easy to look at them and go, "man these guys don't get it, I wouldn't do that"! When in reality, we are just like them!

- **How many of us, myself included**, even though we've seen God do great things in our lives, STILL react with "unbelief" when were faced with challenges?
 - **Like the disciples**, when we respond in unbelief it robs us of being able to operate in the power of God.

So how do we get the power of God in our lives? Remember why Jesus got frustrated with the disciples in the first place, because even though they had been sitting under the teaching of Jesus, they weren't applying what He was trying to teach them.

- Walking in the power of God, starts by applying what God had already been trying to teach you. **Sometimes we can feel like, we need more “revelation” when what we really need is more “application” in our lives.** *James 1:22a*
But be doers of the word, and not hearers only

WALKING IN POWER means applying what God has already been teaching you
Then we will know that....

Small faith is enough faith v20-24

Jesus asks that the boy be brought to Him, and as soon as the boy gets to Jesus, the demon possess the boy, taking control of his body, and violently forced him to the ground.

Scripture tells us that this type of reaction was common when demons encountered Jesus. **The reason this happened** is because the demons knew that Jesus had authority over them.

- **What's crazy about this,** is that even though Jesus and demonic forces are enemies, they're still compelled to submit to His authority over them. In *Luke 4:36*, we read of a crowd's response after Jesus had cast out a different demon. *Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, “What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.”*
 - **As children of God,** part of our inheritance in Christ, is that we have authority over demons. This isn't in our own strength, but the power of Christ in us.

As we look back at Mark 9:21, Jesus does something that might seem strange. Remember, the boy is currently being tormented by the demon that is possessing him, **but instead of springing into action and immediately relieving the boy's pain, Jesus stops and asks the father a question.** He asks, *“how long has this been happening to him”?*

In this moment of chaos, why did Jesus ask this question? Was it for His own information? I don't think so. Jesus didn't need "more info", because He already knew everything about the situation, so why did he ask the father this question?

We see Jesus ask a similar question to another man who had been sick and unable to walk for thirty-eight years in John 5. When Jesus saw this man, He asked him a similar question. He asked, *"Do you want to be made well"?*

- Now, when we logically think about this question it doesn't make sense, because it seems incredibly obvious that this man wanted to be "made well".

What I want us to focus on isn't the logic of the questions Jesus is asking, but the timing. In each situation Jesus asked these questions at a moment in time when their situation was at its lowest point, when the hopelessness and pain was at an all-time high.

- **Many times at our lowest point we tend to place our full attention on the situation and not the Savior.** Jesus asked these seemingly obvious questions to redirect the individual's attention, from the chaos of the problem, to focusing on Him alone. The result would be that, by placing the focus on Jesus, hope would come alive again
 - **Jesus still does the same thing with us!** He steps into the midst of our hopelessness and directs our focus on Him. He gets our focus off the current situation and back on Him, because it's our hope in Him that empowers us face another day, even though it seems like everything is falling apart.

The father response to Jesus was, *"if you can do anything please have compassion and help us".* **You can imagine** that he was struggling with believing that Jesus could help his son. He had already tried going to the disciples who let him down, and now Jesus was going to attempt to do, what seemed impossible.

Jesus hearing the doubt in the father's words replied, *"if you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes".* **Jesus isn't being rude here,** but He is expressing to the father that it's not a question of "If", but trusting that God can do the impossible.

I do want to be clear here, Jesus isn't saying if you just believe hard enough, then God will give you whatever you want, nor is He saying that if something didn't happen in your life, it's your fault because you didn't have enough faith.

What He's doing is challenging the father to believe even when it seems impossible, because God is a "pro" at proving people wrong. This is a huge lesson for us as believers, because it's so easy for us to trust God when things are going well, but as soon as things get rocky our faith can weaken.

- What's true for this father, is true for us as well. Even in the darkest situations God still wants us to trust Him, because He alone always has the final say.

After hearing Jesus' response, the father cried out one of the deepest declarations of faith ever uttered. "Lord I believe, help my unbelief"! It's clear the father wasn't faking anything, but in an act of incredible desperation, he expresses "Lord, I believe, but help me with my doubts"!

- Sometimes, we think having faith means that you don't have doubts. That's not what faith is, faith is essentially choosing to believe despite the presence of doubt.

Think about it, *Hebrews 11:1* Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. When you're hoping for the impossible or what's, "unseen", there's always that little thought in the back of your head that says, "what if it doesn't happen"? It's in moments like these, that we don't run from doubt, but we bring it to the only one who has the final say.

- **As a believer you will experience doubts**, you will have questions, and THAT'S OK! Because that's how you grow in your walk with the Lord. How will you ever know that God is reliable if you never wrestle with doubt?

What's sweet about this expression of faith, from the father of the boy, is that even though it's something we might consider to be small or weak, it was enough for Jesus. *Matthew 17:20* if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

WALKING IN POWER means that even in the midst of chaos, the smallest faith can still move mountains. This helps us to remember that....

Spiritual formulas don't work V25-29

As the crowd hears the commotion of the father's desperate cry, the crowd gathers around to see what Jesus is going to do. They aren't rushing together to support the father, but they are running together because they are expecting a "show" from the "miracle worker". Jesus not wanting to draw even more attention, speaks immediately to the demonic spirit.

What Jesus says here is unique to this passage. Jesus says, *"come out of him and enter him no more"*! This isn't just some general statement, but Jesus is being very specific with His choice of words. **He's not just giving a command to the demonic spirit, but He's also giving the boy's Father a guarantee.**

- This statement from Jesus, is giving the boy's father assurance that the demonic suffering of his son was finally over, and never going to happen again.
 - **This is a picture of the gospel in all of us.** Meaning that because of our faith in Jesus, we will never again be slaves to the darkness of our sin but He has given us power to walk in victory over them.

In a final act of protest, the demon shook the boy violently, but was ultimately expelled from the boy. The boy was then returned to his grateful father.

What's weird about this account is that the story just stops there....We're not told, how the father thanked Jesus, or if there was a huge celebration because the son was finally free, but the account does a quick "fast forward" to a private conversation that the disciples had with Jesus.

The Disciples asked Jesus, "why couldn't we cast the demon out"?! Jesus, seeing this as an opportunity to teach His disciples responds by saying, "this kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting". The emphasis here isn't to express some kind of "formula" to receive the power of God, but to show us that real power comes from our full dependence on God.

What does "depending on God" look like? – We answer this question by looking at the prayer life of Jesus. *Luke 5:16 So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness*

and prayed. Jesus' prayer life modeled for us what it takes for us to walk in the power of God. It's by relying on God through consistent times of prayer.

This is why, I believe prayer is one of the hardest spiritual disciplines to be consistent with, because the enemy doesn't want you to walk in power, because it makes his job easier.

- **So how do we develop a prayer life?** I could try to give you “tips” or a “prayer routine example” on how to develop a prayer life, but that's not it. The Lord has been showing me that these things don't matter much if we don't know “why” were praying.
 - **We pray, not because it's our way of getting what we want from God, but we pray because we know how much we need Him for each and every day of our lives.** We can't love, express compassion, or impact our communities apart from full dependence on God through prayer.

WALKING IN POWER means knowing that “spiritual formulas” have nothing to do with power, but real power comes from being dependent on God alone.

In conclusion:

To answer the question, what does it mean to “Walk in the power of God”, it means to....

- Applying what we've been taught by God
- Realizing that small faith is enough faith for Jesus
- Knowing that spiritual formulas do equal the power of God

Let's pray....

Salvations: Understand this, walking in this kind of power begins as you enter into a relationship with Jesus, as you let Him take control and lead you. I'm going to ask, if you want to give your life to Jesus – raise your hand - and I'll pray a prayer with you

For those of you, who already know Jesus, I'm going to open up the altar here and the Pastors and prayer team will be up front to pray for you if you feel like you need more of His power in your life.

- Invite prayer team and Pastors up for Prayer
- (Have people stand and get into worship)
- Mosaic blessing
- Dismiss people