TOPIC: KINGDOM POWER

Every day, the power of God's kingdom must be demonstrated in our lives.

KEY POINTS

- In March 1942, General Douglas MacArthur issued the famous promise "I shall return" as he left the Philippines during WWII. His words had power and impact on those who heard them, but without the fulfillment of the promise they would have only been just words.
- There are a lot of folks who love to talk. They apparently love the sound of their own voice. Have you ever met someone like that? (Are you someone like that?)
- Sports stars, politicians on campaign, people starting a love relationship, and fishermen are often guilty of making grandiose statements and claims. But don't forget: "Talk is cheap"!
- Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 4:20 contained very carefully chosen words. He was speaking into a society and church that prided itself on its great wisdom and philosophies—things they could discuss and debate endlessly with pride: "My philosophy is better than yours. My rhetoric is more persuasive than yours. My wise statements are much weightier than yours."
- In the first verse of chapter two, Paul made it clear he wasn't going to compete in the arena of oratory, using superior speech and wisdom (although he was eminently qualified to do so).
- Previously in 2:4-5, he had stated the manner in which he came to minister, and, therefore, the only manner in which he could be judged.
- Our eloquence is pointless without the power of God.
- Our nice building and fancy clothes are pointless without the power of God.
- All the money we have in the bank is useless as a ministry tool without the power of God.
- Nothing we have, or do, or say is of any value if it's just based on words and devoid of God's power!
- What kind of power are we talking about? Nothing less than 'dynamis'—the dynamic, dynamite, violent, miracle-working power of the Holy Spirit. The power of God was able to:
  - Deliver the demon-possessed boy in Matthew 17:14-18;
  - Calm the Sea of Galilee (Luke 8:22-25);
  - Dry up the issue of blood (Mark 5:25-29);
  - Raise Lazarus, Jairus' daughter, the widow's son from the dead (John 11:43-44, Mark 5:22-23, 35-42; Luke 7:11-17);
  - Change Peter from a denier of Christ to a proclaimer of Christ (Matthew 26:69-75; Acts 2:14-40);
  - Change Paul from persecutor to preacher (Acts 9:1-17);
  - Change Ananias and Sapphira from liars into corpses (Acts 5:1-11).
- And so much more. The power of God is able to change lives, heal the sick, and raise the dead. God has the power over nature and over the devil. He has the power to provide for our needs, and it is by His power that we are able to live a holy, sanctified life.
- God has the power to do His work *in* you, *for* you and *through* you.

KEY SCRIPTURES

1 Corinthians 4:20

- He is not asking how well you can speak, how talented you are, how well accepted you are by the crowd, or how influential you are in your community.
- He's just asking if you are a willing vessel He can show His power through.
- The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power!
- In 1 Corinthians 4:9, Paul said (to paraphrase): Take a good look at us. What do you see? We are nothing but a "spectacle" to the world.
- When Roman generals would return home from conquest, they would parade in front of the home crowd with their armaments, their soldiers, their booty, and, last of all, the prisoners they had taken who had nothing more to look forward to than a trip to the coliseum to be thrown to the wild beasts or slaughtered by the gladiators. The prisoners were the 'spectacle'—the sign of weakness, defeat, depression and despair.
- Verses 9-13 describe the apostles as seen by the apostles: fools for Christ's sake; weak; without honour; hungry; thirsty; poorly clothed; roughly treated; homeless; laboured; reviled; persecuted; slandered; the scum of the world; the dregs of all things!
- That sounds like the description of a "spectacle" of war. The lowest of the low. The worst of the worst. Nothing more than a laughing stock.
- Yet Paul was able to say in verse 19: "I will come to you soon…and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power."
- Every day the power of God's kingdom can, and must, be demonstrated in our lives—not in word, but in power.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. The lesson gives a few examples of instances in which the power of God was demonstrated. What other examples from the Bible come to your mind?
2. What are some examples of the power of God being exercised in your own life or in the lives of those closest to you?
   a) Were they all positive experiences? Was there ever a negative experience (something similar to Ananias and Sapphira)?
   b) For the latter, how could one go about recovering? What was the lesson to be learned?
3. Looking at Ananias and Sapphira as examples, what are the things a person can do to prevent such an outcome from occurring?

Prayer Time

Lord, let Your work be done in me, for me, and through me. Help me to be a sanctified vessel of honour that is useful to the Master. In Jesus' name, Amen.

L.G. ice-Breaker: What are your thoughts about the current weather we're experiencing?

WEEK OF SUNDAY, MAY 28, 2017

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week's message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

(Reminds me/Confirms) (New idea) (Think about)

(Do this) (Speaks to my heart) (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS