

The Power Principle

Healing Then & Now:

Luke 4:14-15, 5:17; Acts 2:1-4

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We just heard another testimony of healing. The idea of praying and expecting people to get well was foreign to me. I prayed and hoped people would get better, but I could not relate to the attitude of Jesus. He had such confidence. I could not relate to the descriptions of his healing ministry in the gospels. They seemed fantastic, mythical and other-worldly. However, I began to witness some of his confidence and some of his results in the new congregation I was leading. During our Pastoral Prayer time, people reported all kinds of healing. A cut finger healed up miraculously. A woman's labor pains disappeared as her husband laid his hands on her and prayed. A man who refused treatment for his terminal cancer found his disease arrested and his pain chased away by some of the men in the congregation laying hands on him. His life was extended in health for at least two years. It wasn't long before Jesus' healing ministry didn't seem so distant. Stories of healing in the gospels ceased being interesting facts. They became lessons for acting as an apprentice disciple of Jesus. On this day of Pentecost, when we celebrate the *empowerment* of people who put repent (that means change their minds) and believe in Jesus, I want to discuss and apply a principle I learned from studying the healing ministry of Jesus and his disciples. I call this life-changing discovery: *The Power Principle*. (If you desire this message is available in CD or manuscript form.)

First, understand that Jesus of Nazareth live a fully human life. He had the same human body we have. He experienced the law of gravity like we do. Old Testament prophecies suggest

that there was nothing remarkable about him physically. Nothing was particularly attractive, becoming or outstanding.

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. (Isaiah 52:8, NIV)

Second, understand that Jesus suffered loss like we do. Do you think God spared all of Jesus' friends, all of Jesus' family, all of Jesus' neighbors from disease, accident and death while he was growing up? Or do you think he witnessed those things and wept? It is pretty clear that that Jesus' father Joseph trained him as a carpenter, perhaps beginning his lessons before he turned 12, and then in the next 15 or so years died. It is clear from the gospels that the people from Nazareth, Jesus' hometown, never associated him with healing, special treatment or God's favor.

Can you understand that Jesus' lived a fully human life and imagine what that meant for him day to day? Although the first miracle of Jesus occurred before he thought he was ready, urged on by his mother at a wedding reception (John writes about it in the second chapter of his gospel), he performed no miracle until he had his own day of Pentecost. Jesus went to be baptized by John, as he was in the water praying, the Spirit of God came upon him. John the Baptist saw the Spirit descend upon him like a dove. Luke writes the following about Jesus:

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days... (Luke 4:1-2, NIV)

Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit in a way that he was not previously. He was in communion with the love of God in a new way. He returned to Galilee with this amazing joy and was then led into the wilderness to battle the temptations of the devil for forty days. At the end of those 40 days, weakened by hunger, we read in Matthew and Luke's gospel how at last he

overcame the devil's ploys. Then comes the text we read today. Remember, "*Full of the Spirit,*" Jesus was led into the wilderness; but now we read:

Jesus returned to Galilee IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. (Luke 4:14-15, NIV)

The first truth about the Power Principle is that it is the power of God's Spirit. Forget about doing the works of Jesus until you have received the same Spirit he received from God. Have you had your day of Pentecost? Could it be described of you that you are full of God's Spirit? You can't duplicate this. You can't manufacture it. You either know that you are loved by God, forgiven through the cross, and are full of gratitude, or you are crippled by unbelief. Which is it? Tell me "yes" if you believe the following is true. Do you believe that God is righteous in defining sin, hating sin and judging sinners like you? (yes.) Do you believe that Jesus died for the sins of all including yours? (yes) Do you believe he covered all sins, even the most nasty, unspeakable, harmful ones ever committed? (yes) Do you believe he fulfills his promises? (yes.) Do you believe that God forgives your unbelief if you confess it? (yes) Have you confessed it? Have you called on Jesus to release you from your guilt and include you in his salvation? Aren't you now grateful? Isn't it wonderful to be given eternal life? Don't you feel relief and love for God? That is God's Spirit ministering to your heart. If you are full of love for God, that is God's Spirit. When the Spirit came upon believers on the day of Pentecost their mouths were full of praise for God because their hearts were full of love for God. Immediately, they had desire and ability to praise God. The Spirit gave them that power. God's Spirit also immediately made them witnesses to other people. God gave these believers the ability to speak in the language of other people. The Power Principle they experienced was the power of God's Spirit. Have you received the Spirit? Is the Spirit influencing what you think and feel?

The second truth about the Power Principle is that it is activated by understanding and faith. Jesus was full of the Spirit when he entered the desert, but when he returned to Galilee from prayer, fasting and defeating the temptations of Satan, he was walking in the power of the Spirit. He was full of confidence that God beat Satan through him, that God ruled through him.

Thus with joy and understanding, he proclaimed: “The kingdom of God has come. Repent and believe the good news!” He exclaimed, “All things are possible for the one who believes.”

Unclean spirits, confronted with such faith and power, fearfully shrieked through the mouths of those they afflicted. In confidence Jesus rebuked them and their works. He healed individuals, and then the faith of people soared so that they sought healing from him. Often Jesus attributed the healing to the seeker’s faith. There were times when unbelief covered a community like a

pall. In the town of Bethsaida, a blind man asked Jesus to heal him. Jesus led the blind man out

of town to a remote place. After two sessions of ministry, the man was healed. Jesus advised the man to avoid Bethsaida. I don’t know if Jesus feared a relapse if the formerly blind man entered that community of skepticism, if he saw the man being attacked or what. Whatever the case, he

saw that community as harmful to this man. When Jesus entered a home and raised a synagogue ruler’s daughter to life, he changed the atmosphere by clearing the house of mourners and only

permitting five believers to join him. When Jesus returned to his hometown of Nazareth, he was hindered. He experienced a power outage and marveled at the unbelief. He could only help a

few. Consider this in contrast to our second Scripture reading, Luke 5:17. It says:

One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law... were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick. (Luke 5:17, NIV)

You might be tempted to think that if faith activates this power, how come the power of God was present with Jesus to heal when skeptical Pharisees and religious teachers were present?

Brothers and sisters, the faith of the people in that house was so strong that four men tore a hole in the roof and lowered their paralyzed friend. Despite those skeptics the atmosphere was charged with faith in the love and power of God. Indeed, Jesus commissioned his disciples to heal and they experienced stunning success for a time. However, one day they were defeated. A young boy was mute, deaf, suffered seizures and once seemed thrown into a fire. They couldn't help the boy at all. It was a testy situation and the environment was charged with fear. Jesus told his disciples that it wasn't God's will that the boy be afflicted. He said that their power failure was due to unbelief. The incident is recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke. Do you remember the story? The boy's father cried, "I believe. Help my unbelief." Perhaps, that is where some of us are today. Will you cry that to Jesus? In two of the gospels, Jesus tells his disciples at a later time that prayer and fasting are vital.

That brings us to the third truth about the power principle. Jesus walked in the power of the Spirit because in prayer and fasting he defeated Satan's deception. In Luke 6, I observe Jesus praying all night and then displaying unusual power the next day. Power comes out of him and heals all who touch him. In Acts 4 the community gathers for prayer and then believers are filled with the Spirit and become boldly confident. In Acts 5 prayer and faith lead to an incident where Peter's shadow crosses over people and heals whoever is there.

The God these folk experienced is present here in the Spirit. The Spirit has already worked in our hearts so that we have repented from our unbelief. Are you ready to see God work through your faith? Are you ready to see the blessings of God's kingdom come through you? Let me pray first and then give you some instructions.

TODAY'S PROCEDURE:

- 1. Pray thanking God and rebuking Satan's deception of unbelief**
- 2. Instruct people for Corporate Healing**

- a. **In the name of Jesus, I bless you and release divine healing into your body**
 - b. **With Satan bound, may the blessings of the medicines and treatments bring you wholeness**
 - c. **Lord may you give me insight to minister what you want**
3. **Pray for neighbor**
 4. **Personal Ministry of Healing**