

Sabbath School Lesson #3 – The Power of the Exalted Jesus – 8-14 July 2023

Christ would have us know the power that God wrought in Him. Paul writes, “And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:19-20). From this we learn that if we believe God, we shall know the exceeding richness of His power, even of that power which raised Jesus from the dead. The death and resurrection of Christ is God’s pledge to us that He will save us from sin, if we believe in Him; and it shows the power that will be put forth in order to effect this. This was the thought in the mind of Paul when he wrote that he counted all things loss if he might win Christ, and be found not having his own righteousness, “but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead” (Philippians 3:9-11). To know the power of Christ’s resurrection, is to experience the working of that same power, in the removal of sin, which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. Who could fail with this power? It is of this power and its results that Peter speaks, when he says to us: “Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Peter 1:2-4). This is an assurance that the divine power of God, exhibited in the resurrection of Christ, is amply sufficient to enable one to overcome all the lusts of the flesh. This is what we are taught also in the following: “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). What is it that will bring to us this mighty power? Faith in Jesus Christ. Let the sinner but have an intense desire to be freed from the bondage of sin, and let him have the faith that the man “full of leprosy” had when he said, “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean,” and the Lord will say to him, as He did to the leper, “I will: be thou clean” (Luke 5:12-13). If the Spirit of the Son of God is in the heart (Galatians 4:6), the soul will “be filled with all the fulness of God” (Ephesians 3:16-19). What greater power could one ask for than this? And the possession of this power is a sure antidote for sin, and a preserver against it, for sin is the working of Satan, and the resurrection of Christ from the dead marked His victory over Satan. He had entered into Satan’s house and bound him, and had taken all his armour wherein he trusted, so that when He ascended into heaven He could say, “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18).

Sunday: Praying and Thanksgiving – What does it really mean to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)? The apostle did not exhort others to do that which he did not do himself, for he told the Ephesians that he ceased not to mention them in his prayers (Ephesians 1:16) and the Romans that without ceasing he prayed for them (Romans 1:9). It is not to be supposed that the apostle had the brethren at Rome on his mind every waking hour of the day, for in that case he could not have thought of anything else. No man can be consciously in prayer every moment, but all can continue “instant in prayer,” or, as Berean translates it, “persistent in prayer” (Romans 12:12). This is in harmony with what our Saviour said, that “men ought always to pray, and not to faint,” or grow weary (Luke 18:1). In the parable that follows, the unjust judge complains of the “continual coming” of the poor widow. That is an illustration of praying without ceasing. It is not that we are to be every moment in conscious prayer, for then important duties would be neglected, but it is that we should not grow weary of praying. “Rejoice evermore” (1 Thessalonians 5:16). Paul prayed for others so much that he had no time to worry about himself. He had never seen the Romans, yet he prayed for them as earnestly as for the churches that he had raised up. Recounting his labours and sufferings, he adds that they are “beside those things that are without, that

which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches” (2 Corinthians 11:28). “As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing” (2 Corinthians 6:10). He fulfilled the law of Christ by bearing the burdens of others. Thus it was that he was able to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ suffered on the cross for others, but it was “for the joy that was set before Him” (Hebrews 12:2). If you devote to others, share the joy of their Lord, you can rejoice in Him.

Monday: Experiencing Insight From the Holy Spirit – What does it mean in daily life to experience “the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe”? Having accepted Christ’s life, we remember that the future life is to be His, not ours. Then the same spirit of self-renunciation that led us to accept Christ must be ever present with us to lead us to hold Him. We must pray not only for a clean heart to be created in us, but also for a steadfast spirit to be renewed within us. How do we hold Him? – Just the same as we accepted Him and were raised with Him; through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. With intense longing that His life shall be manifest in ours, we lay hold of it through our faith in the power that raised Christ from the dead. We know that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead can quicken us, for that is why Christ was raised from the dead. He “was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25).

Tuesday: Participating in Resurrection Power – What does it mean to participate in the power of the resurrection of Christ daily? God has provided that it shall be kept in mind continually. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:1-3). Baptism marks the beginning of a new life in Christ, and renewing of that life daily (2 Corinthians 4:16) is making known of the “power of His resurrection” (Philippians 3:10). The working of God in man “both to will and to do of His good pleasure,” is the working of “the mighty power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.” There can be no greater exhibition of power than that which is required to raise the dead. It is creative power. This is the power which is given to us in Christ, the acceptance of which we acknowledge when we are buried with Him by baptism into His death, and are raised in Him. How true it is that “His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). And it is the manifestation of the power of Christ’s life in our lives that gives us a sure hope of eternal life with Him. For says the apostle: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:3-5).

Wednesday: Christ Above All Powers – What comfort is in knowing that Christ is above all powers of evil that besets us? “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned” (Isaiah 40:1-2). Shall we conclude therefore that we may safely go to sleep? No, but we make use of the victory. Our conflict is against principalities and powers (Ephesians 6:12), but Jesus has “spoiled principalities and powers,” and made a triumphant show of them (Colossians 2:15), and has been raised to sit in heavenly places, “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” (Ephesians 1:20-21), and God has also raised us up with Him, to sit with Him in the same heavenly places (Ephesians 2:1-6), equally high above all principalities and powers in the universe. We ought to say, from the heart, “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Thursday: Jesus, All Things, and His Church – What does it mean that Christ is the head of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23)? “He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church” (Colossians 1:17-18). The church is the body of Christ. But this does not mean that anything that calls itself the church is therefore necessarily the body of Christ, but that nothing is the church unless it is the body of Christ; and nothing is the body of Christ unless it is the living manifestation of the Spirit of Christ. Only those are Christ’s who have His Spirit (Romans 8:9). The body of Christ is that which is directly connected with the Head and “increaseth with the increase of God” (Colossian 2:19).