

Series: Ephesians: *The Christian Mystery and Mission*

Week 5

CDOBC – beginning on 2/6/11

Title: “**Jesus’ Job**”

1:19-23 ~ March 6, 2011

OBJECTIVE: To help believers realize the power of God they have now.

Announcements

- Welcome / guests – communication cards
- Men’s Golf Outing – March 19th @ The Views Golf Club
- Welcome Class March 9
- First Taste Luncheon – Sunday March 13
- Prayer gathering – 6 p.m.
- Men’s Breakfast – Sat. 3/12

Opening prayer...

Funny modern day parable...

A local bar began construction on expansion of their building to increase their business. In response, the local Church started a campaign to block the bar from expanding with petitions and prayers. Work progressed right up until the week before the grand reopening when lightning struck the bar and it burned to the ground!

After the bar burning to the ground by a lightning strike, the church folks were rather smug in their outlook, bragging about “the power of prayer”, until the bar owner sued the church on the grounds that the church . . . “was ultimately responsible for the demise of his building, either through direct or indirect actions or means.”

In its reply to the court, the church vehemently denied all responsibility or any connection to the building's demise.

The judge read through the plaintiff's complaint and the defendant's reply, and at the opening hearing he commented... “I don’t know how I'm going to decide this, but it appears from the paperwork that we have a bar owner who believes in the power of prayer, and an entire church congregation that now does not.”

Problem: The vast majority of believers in Christ do not realize this power they inherently have from the moment of their salvation – and some that realize they have it don't ever feel it or utilize it in their life as they battle sin. Having 'power' in their Christian life is something foreign and unfamiliar to most modern-day believers. But be assured...God didn't give us this power to be a token or theoretical idea. He didn't lead Paul to write about this as a spiritual carrot to dangle in front of His adopted children with no intention for us to have this power each day in our life.

The power of God in us vs. 19-20

"...and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

We are picking up right in the middle of Paul's prayer – that began in vs. 15.

Here in vs. 19, Paul brings to light the power of God in the life of each believer. Notice the power of God is for believers...not for humanity in general.

The power that we have as believers is just like the power that raised Christ from the dead – and seated Christ in the heavenly realms!

Paul's prayer gives us the primary key to understanding and knowing this power...

The key to knowing this power:

Vs. 18 – the eyes of your heart must be enlightened to this reality. The first part of getting a hold of the power of God in your life is to understand that you have this power. Remember, this "knowing" is not just an intellectual understanding – but that we would know and *experience* these things.

Some reasons we don't know/see God's power... Other things that prevent us from knowing and using the power of God in our life:

We minimize demonic powers at work against us. (vs. 21-22)*

If you are free from demonic control, that in itself is evidence of the unsurpassed power of God at work in your life.

The modern mind tends to disregard the spirit world – especially the spiritual forces of darkness and evil. But don't be fooled by the arrogance and naiveté of modern thinking. The spiritual world is real...and it is full of power – power to control kings and kingdoms...powerful enough to influence nations...powerful enough to pollute the people against each other...powerful enough to turn the Church against itself so the world sees hatred, strife, fighting, bickering, name-calling, gossiping, and slander where it should see God's love on full display.

The unity we have in this church is proof of God's power at work in this place – through each of us – to repel the demonic forces that would try to divide us against each other.

We minimize the power and results of the resurrection. (vs. 20-22) *

We are so used to the Easter story, that we only see people on the cross...not God in the flesh. We read about the joy of the Disciples, and we don't notice the amazing miracle of the resurrection or the cosmic and eternal victory that took place when Jesus was raised from the dead. And not only was He raised from the dead, but He was then seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly realms.

Galatians 2:20

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

1 Cor. 15:55

“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”

John 11:25-26

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;26and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”

What happened to Jesus both at the moment of His resurrection, but also what happened to Him after His resurrection was a tremendous display of God’s power – but we often don’t realize what kind of power that requires! Paul tells us in vs. 20 that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God – which emphasizes the authority of Christ – and in 2:6 Paul gives us some more insight into this...he tells us that when we put our faith in Christ, we also were seated with Christ in the heavenly realms!

We minimize the power of sin in our life. (vs. 23) *

We don’t realize how strong and deadly sin is. But yet sin is being conquered in our life!

If you are a healthy Christian as you sit here today, your condition of health is due to the power of God. Only when you realize how dangerous and deadly sin is will you begin to understand and appreciate the power of God that keeps you in good ‘health’.

(* See sermon The Immeasurable Greatness of His Power Toward Us, by John Piper, August 4, 2010)

Paul doesn’t just tell us about the power we have – but he makes sure we know that this power is beyond comparison to any other

power. It's not just incomparable power...it's incomparably **great** power!

This power (*dunamis*) is like the working (*energeia*) of His mighty (*kratos*) strength (*ischus*).

And it's this power that we have at our disposal! The same power that raised Christ and seated Christ is the power we have to use each day as we strive to please God in every way.

But Steve...the sin in my life seems too strong! I can't get the upper hand against it...it's Rocky Balboa sin...no matter how much I pummel it, it gets up and starts punching me back and defeats me again and again and again!

Is this true of you? Do you have sins that continually dominate you and defeat you? These sins can indeed be powerful, but we are the superpower in the room folks...and when we get to vs. 23, we'll see another way this power works – but Paul makes it clear that:

Christ is ruling with power over all things vs. 21

21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

When Paul tells us that Jesus is far above all other rulers, authorities, powers, and dominions – when he says that God has put all things under the feet of Jesus – it was an important truth for the Ephesians to know.

Ephesus was a pagan city that worshiped many idols, demons, and the occult. IN fact, Acts 19 tells us that there was an entire industry in Ephesus built around exorcism and spirit-work.

Demonic power was a real issue in Ephesus – and the believers Paul is writing to most likely were personally familiar with these spiritual realities.

I've never experienced those things. We think that temptation is the great manifestation of evil and the spiritual realm. Now the temptations we face are indeed one of the battle scenes that take place in this great spiritual war, but I believe our temptation is minor compared to the spiritual power and activity Satan and his demons would utilize if they weren't being held back by a greater power – the power of God on our behalf!

Satan, the demons, and all spiritual authorities are subject to Christ. God has put them on a leash!

Colossians 2:15“And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”

In addition, there is no time limit on Christ's reign. Over the past few months, we've been watching the events in the Middle East as long-time dictators are facing the revolt of their citizens. Egypt's longtime dictator Hosni Mubarak ended his 30 year reign when he finally gave way to the people's demand that he step down. Right now Libya's dictator Muammar Qaddafi is fighting to hold onto his 40 year reign of power. All over the Middle East we are seeing similar scenarios take shape as a shift of power is taking place. But the power and reign of Christ will never end. It exists right now – and it will continue into the age to come! The rule of Christ is eternal – and His power will never end.

Christ works with power through the Church vs. 22-23

22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.”

Christ's position of rule and authority is God's gift to the Church! A familiar analogy in the N.T. – Christ as the head of the Church – the Church is the Body of Christ.(see 1 Cor. 12)

Jesus is a gift to us...not just on the cross, but in His position right now!

The relationship of us (the church) to Christ (our head) is significant.

We share our life with Christ...the head and the body share life.
The body naturally submits to the head

A leg that uncontrollably twitches is spastic!

A believer who does their own thing...apart from Christ – is spastic!

“Fullness” – refers to the body of Christ (the church) which is the fullness of Jesus Christ which fills all in all.

This “fullness” has to do with our obedience to Christ and how we represent Him to the world. We are the view of Christ that the world has. We are the ones whose love for one another will give evidence of Jesus’ existence (John 13). We are the fullness of Christ to the world.

Earlier we talked about “Rocky Balboa sins” – the sins that no matter how hard we hit them...they always get up and come back at us and defeat us. We have seen how Christ is more powerful than any other spiritual forces, and since we as believers are “in Christ”, His power is our power. But the church as the “fullness” of Christ is another way that we can use God’s power to fight against our sin. How can we help one another defeat sin in our life? This is where praying for one another – confessing our sins to one another – sharing the truth with one another – holding each other accountable – give/extend grace to one another – encouraging one another – forgiving one another – this is one of the reasons all of these things are commanded in the Church. We can’t fight sin on our own...we need Christ – and we need the Church – the fellow believers in the Body of Christ who can come alongside us and fight with us.

Application

Know God's power in you who believe in Christ.

We need to not only realize this as truth (eye of our heart), but we need to realize that God's power is at work in us and around us in ways we don't recognize.

2 Kings 6:16-17

"Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Plug into God's power in your Christian life.

The power of God we have – in Christ – is greater / more powerful than any sin you might be fighting against. Christ is the Head...He is in a position of complete and total authority and dominion over all in the heavenly realms. God gives us this power for us to use – not just think about. The power of God is to be a part of our *experience* in the Christian life – not just part our doctrine or theology. It's not a marketing ploy to give the illusion of a great benefit of faith – it's a real part of our faith – a real part of the Christian's daily life.

Philippians 4:8

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things."

Closing prayer --Transition to communion