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Got Power?



One of my favorite vacation spots is Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and nearby Pigeon Forge. There is something about vacationing in the Great Smoky Mountains that feels like taking a deep, refreshing breath.

Although I don't particularly enjoy the crowds found there during the Fall, the Smoky Mountains are wonderfully beautiful then. The brush strokes of yellow, orange, and red across the mountain trees just make one want to sit down in an old rocking chair and rest a while.

In Pigeon Forge there is a picturesque restaurant called The Old Mill built inside an old water-powered gristmill on the bank of the Little Pigeon River. In the early 1800's, the mill produced the flours, meals from corn and wheat, and even the electricity for the little town. One of The Old Mill's most distinctive features is the giant water wheel that harnesses the flow of the Little Pigeon River. The Old Mill was created to produce for the people. Its flow and the harnessing of its power had distinctive purpose.

On Sunday, I reminisced about The Old Mill, it was as if I were there. In my mind's eye, I could see the beautiful river flowing. I could feel the spray off the water as it tumbled along. I could hear the music of the moving water.

And I thought about how many of us get caught up in the experiences that can accompany living beside what we identify as God's river. We love the beauty of the river. We are refreshed by the cool spray we feel as we stand close to the river. We are intoxicated by the sound of the flowing water.

When we experience the wonderfully refreshing flow of God's Spirit in power, the purpose of that flow is not primarily for us to "feel" good, although at times that does happen. The purpose is to use that power for the good of the people.

I remember when I first experienced this supernatural flow of God's Spirit in a different way than I had previously known. I had known His Spirit teaching me through the Word. I had known the convicting power of the Spirit of God. I had known the comforting presence of His Spirit. But when I first experienced God's Spirit in what many would call the Baptism of the Holy Spirit or being filled with the Holy Spirit, I felt as if I had been immersed in liquid love. For days my physical body felt warmed. I cared nothing for the natural world. I just wanted to bask in God's presence. Food was completely unimportant. Fasting became as easy as breathing. For days, I just wanted to pull away from everything and everyone and bathe in this experience. After about a week and a half, I remember my husband telling me that washing dishes was spiritual too!

And as wonderful as our experiences with God can be, (and they are important for us individually), the purpose of these experiences is to empower us to touch lives for God.

Acts 1:8 says that we will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us, and WE WILL BE WITNESSES.

There is purpose in the power.

The early church was filled with God's power and according to Acts, they went out among the people, preaching, teaching, feeding, ministering healing, and touching people lives.

Our primary example is Jesus himself whom "God anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the enemy, because God was with him." In fact, his own proclamation of his earthly ministry declared that he was "anointed" to preach the gospel to the poor, heal the brokenhearted, proclaim freedom to those who were bound and oppressed, and open the eyes of the blind.

I think one of the greatest deceptions of God's people is when we set aside the example of Jesus. We teach that he was 100% human and 100% God, but it's really hard for us to comprehend the 100% human part. When we fail to honor the truth about the humanity of Jesus, we are disregarding the blueprint for our own lives.

Living as a human filled with God's Spirit has purpose. The purpose is for the people - the masses of humanity all around us who need hope, who need healing, who need God.

So today the question is "Got power?" If so, you've got purpose. And according to Jesus, that purpose will carry us into our hometowns and on to the ends of the world as we follow his example of doing good, healing the brokenhearted, and ministering emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual freedom to the world around us.

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