

Message October 30, 2011
Richmond Hill Baptist Church
Patrick DeFoe, Associate Pastor

Divine Power

Over the past 14 weeks we have studied the following topics:

Heroes of the Faith (July 24 – September 4)

Psalm 11:7 ⁷ *For the LORD is righteous, he loves justice; upright men (women) will see his face.”*

Isaiah 6:8 ⁸ *“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”*

Not a Fan (October 18 – October 23)

Luke 9:23 (KJV) ²³ *And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

I have to give the credit to Pastor Shane for picking these series and studies. That said, I don't think this was purely chance or blind luck. I believe God's hand was upon Shane when these topics and sequence were chosen. These series were brought before us for a reason – God is calling us to a higher level of personal and church commitment on our journey with Him.

Our Power – Divine Power --- Men & women typically journey through life under their own power. That's the equivalent of living life with AAA battery power; hardly enough for the battles we face in this world. Surely AAA power isn't enough to resist the evil schemes and attacks of the devil – attacks that destroy our work for the Lord and our walk with the Lord. If we are to successfully be a completely committed follower of Jesus we need to “Plug into God's Power” – His Divine Power.

I think of you often and pray for you regularly. I believe that God has something special planned for us, individually and collectively, and He is active among us to achieve His purposes. My prayers usually focus on God helping us to be the best church we can be to achieve His Kingdom purposes. I pray for every member to commit their lives fully to the Lord – for each of us to be followers of Jesus.

I remember and honor the miracle of RHBC that we celebrate each spring. But, what really gets me excited is to realize all the miracles that God has ready to give us if we just follow Him as faithful followers, dying daily to Him. I don't doubt for one second that God has miracles of healing, restoration, salvation, and changed lives, community and nation ready for us. Just the thought of it fills me with anticipation.

One reoccurring theme in my prayers is that we are able to resist the devil. Satan attacks every Christian with a vengeance. Satan's primary objective is to separate you from God. His typical style is to try to influence and control our thoughts.

Jesus wants us to be completely committed followers. Satan, on the other hand, does all he can to tell us we can't be. He heaps lies upon lies in our minds. Satan's primary focus is in the realm of the spirit. Paul's letter to the Ephesian Christians makes that point very clear.

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." Ephesians 6:12

Some of Satan's most powerful weapons are—fear, anger, doubt, worry, and guilt. Satan's greatest weapon however is what we call low self-esteem/self-doubt.

Unfortunately low self-esteem is rampant among God's people. Low self-esteem is this gut-level feeling of inferiority, inadequacy, and low self-worth that shackles many, if not most, Christians. Even though we have wonderful spiritual experiences, the knowledge of God's Word, and strong faith many of us just can't get past low self esteem. Low self esteem begins in the crib, follows us to grade school, seems to worsen in high school, and for many of us, it stays with us in one form or another our whole life. I wonder if any of us are ever immune to self-doubt?

We are going to look at the four ways Satan uses this deadliest of all weapons in his arsenal to bring defeat and discouragement into our lives.

First, low self-esteem paralyzes your potential. This is the tragic loss of 'what might have been' in people's own spiritual development, in their impact upon the people in a local church, and even their own families and children. These are the wasted gifts and talents, the lost potential and possibilities of God's people being and doing great things for His kingdom. This is exactly what Satan wants for us as Christians—to so tie us up in low self-worth that we are tied down, bound up, frozen and paralyzed.

Second, low self-esteem destroys your dreams. I love **William Carey's** philosophy of life. "Expect great things from God, attempt great things for God." But if we have a low vision of ourselves and what God through us, then our dreams will turn to ashes, our castles will all grumble, and our fortune will turn to loss. God's great plan for your life will never happen.

Third, low self-esteem ruins our relationship with God and with others. If you consider yourself inferior or worthless, then it follows that God must not love you nor care for you very much and you can't be fully effective in your ministry. Low-self esteem also affects our relationships with people. Satan uses our feelings of inferiority to isolate us from other people. Alienation from God and people results in road blocked ministry.

Fourth, low self-esteem sabotages our Christian service. Do you know what the first thing most people say when asked to serve the Lord? "Teach Connect Class, not me. I don't know enough about the Bible?" "Share my testimony in worship, not me. I get tongue-tied talking in front of people." "Work with the youth? I wouldn't have any idea

where to begin.” “Pray out loud? That would scare me to death.” Ineffective Christians make Satan giddy with glee.¹

¹ Sicklerville United Methodist Church, Series: Healing for Damaged Emotions #3 Satan’s Deadliest Weapon, January 25, 2009; Numbers 13:13, 26-33, 14:4-9, Ephesians 6:10-12

Note the impact to potential, dreams, relationships and service – all destroyed or hindered by low self esteem. Do you see now why Satan uses this as his primary weapon?

If we are to stand strong in the Lord, to a completely committed follower and resist the destruction of Satan then we can’t rely on AAA battery power. No Sir! We must “Plug into the Power of God”. In Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians, he tells us about “divine power” and it is to this subject we will spend the rest of our time together today.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

³For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

World’s Weapons - The world uses human wisdom, exciting attractions, manipulation, demonstrations that ultimately result in raised voices, in clenched fists and outbreaks of conflict (wars), boycotts, and/or strikes to try to solve its problems. These are the only weapons of the world knows. All we have to do is look at the world uprisings in 2011; the sit-ins and riots to see many of the weapons of the world in action. History proves over and over again that these do not bring lasting peace and change. Surely, they can’t defeat Satan and in all likelihood are actually tools in the hand of Satan.

“Strongholds” - include our personal sinful habits but they also include the “ills” of society. Paul places them into three categories 1) society’s arguments (reasoning’s) that go against the moral design that God has created. For example redefining what marriage means, accepting abortion as an acceptable alternative, or 2) proud obstacles to the knowledge of God - pride in our own intelligence, ability and accomplishments, acting and living as if there were no God, and 3) thoughts that rebel against God, any form of outward defiance of God’s laws and moral values, one of which is self doubt.

Christian Weapons - Paul makes it clear that have other weapons. God never leaves us without a way to live lives that are holy and pleasing to Him. He gives us Divine Power in the form of five weapons.

Weapon #1: Truth

¹⁷ **“For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”**
John 1:17

⁶ **“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.”** John 14:6

The one we would put first is truth. Truth is realism. The wonderful thing about the Word of God is that, when you understand the world as the Bible sees it, you are looking at life the way it really is. The Christian is given an insight into life and reality that others do not have. We know what is behind the forces at work in our society today, and we ought to know how to go about overcoming them.

Truth is a person: Jesus Christ. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6). As we read the Gospels, we see that Jesus is a man who understands life. He does not act like anybody else because he really sees what is happening. He ignores much of the visible symptoms and strikes right at the heart, at the cause of certain events. That is why what he did was so different from the world around. If we are going to follow him, we will adopt His methods. We can't afford to let ourselves fall into the patterns the world uses. We must begin to see things from God's point of view; His absolute truth.

So, the first and greatest weapon of all is truth: Truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

Weapon #2: Love

¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. 1 John 4:16

We love because God first loved us. We know God is love and that He sent Jesus (His only begotten Son) to die for us out of love. We do what is right because of His love for us and our love for Him. God's love for us lifts us up to new heights of life.

¹⁵ "Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ." Ephesians 4:15

Everywhere in Scripture we seek truth linked with love. We individually and as a church body grow into Godly maturity through God's love and the love of other Christian brothers and sisters toward us. Love is a powerful weapon. Love is a mighty force.

Christians cannot truly live unless we live our lives for others through Godly love.

Weapon #3: Faith

"These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. ⁸ I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut." Revelation 3:7 – 8

Linked to truth and love everywhere in Scripture, is faith. Faith is the recognition that God is present in history. He has not left us alone to stumble on our own way. God is at work. The Lord Jesus sits in control of all the nations of earth. "He opens and no man shuts. He shuts and no man opens..." (**Revelation 3:7**).

Faith believes that, and expects God to do something. We know of men and women who, through faith, have stopped the mouths of lions, open the doors of prisons, and change the

course of history. Faith comes down and lays hold of people like you and me and changes the course of history through us.

Faith is the key to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Weapon #4: Prayer

² **“This is what the LORD says, he who made the earth, the LORD who formed it and established it—the LORD is his name: ³ ‘Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.” Jeremiah 33:2-3**

According to Dr. Herbert Lockyer, Sr., there are 650 definite prayers recorded in the Bible. We can learn much about prayer and how God uses it by studying the prayers of the Bible. We are constantly exhorted to pray, both individually and corporately. Again and again Biblical history and our life experiences testify that events have been drastically altered by Christians who pray.

“God shapes the world by prayer. The more prayer there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil...” **E.M. Bounds**

Weapon #5: The Word of God

¹² **For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12**

The Word of God stands firm in the heavens. It is dynamic and powerful and it accomplishes great things in our lives. The Word of God releases grace, power, and revelation by which we grow in our faith and commitment to Jesus Christ. The Word of God is the sword God has given us by which we may fight Satan. Jesus during His temptation by Satan used the Word of God to defeat him at every turn. Modeling our lives after Jesus, we must do likewise.

Scripture is our life line to God's power.

God's divine power, through five powerful weapons, is readily available for our use in overcoming Satan and his lies and his tactic of “self doubt”. Truth, Love, Prayer, Faith and the Word of God can overcome anything the devil or the world throws our way.

³ ***His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Him who called us by his own glory and goodness.* 2 Peter 1:3**

God has placed in our hands the opportunity to change our own lives, our homes, our communities, and our nation. I encourage you to boldly step forward trusting God's Divine Power so you can become the man, woman, student or child God has called you to be. May God grant that we will do it? You are the salt of the earth. **(Matthew 5:13a)**. You are the light of the world. **(Matthew 5:14)**

Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for this honest look at who we are. Forgive us for our failure to believe it. Help us from here on to begin to use the weapons of our warfare, to act like we ought to be acting and react the way we should react. Call us to this great and challenging work of changing the world of our day by the power you have vested in us by means of the truth, love, faith, prayer and your Word. We have your Holy Spirit to enable us with your Divine Power. We ask it in the name of Jesus, our Lord, Amen.

After Service closing comments: God's divine power is available to us but only if we have accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. God's power is given to those who love and worship Him. If you haven't made this life changing decision I encourage you to speak to us ASAP. You can speak to me, Shane or any of our staff or members. Many can assist you.

The God you would hold exalted and worship from afar is no further away than your own heart.