

MORE POWER

Last Sunday in church we sang a song that was written in the 80s. The chorus says, "More love, more power, more of You in my life." I do want more of God in my life. I want to know His love for me in greater measure and I want to demonstrate His love more often, to more people, and more effectively.

But what am I asking for when I ask for more power? Certainly I want the Holy Spirit's enabling to do the "good works God has planned for me to walk in" (Eph.2:10). I want the power to resist temptation and sin. I want to know His "incomparably great power . . . which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead" (Eph. 1:19-20). Like John Wimber, the man who wrote the song, I would love to be able to do the "fun stuff" like healing people, having words of knowledge that would stun people into the realization that God knows all about them, or other supernatural experiences.

We seem to forget, however, that forgiving someone who has gravely wounded you is also an act of resurrection power. Repenting and trusting God to keep besetting sins at bay long term is also an act of resurrection power. And while struggling through a chronic or life-threatening illness may look to us like just hanging on by the skin of our teeth, it is only possible by the unleashed power of God in our lives.

As we look to Jesus as the perfect Example of walking in the power of God, we tend to focus on the miracles – walking on water, multiplying food, calming storms, healing people, raising the dead – but forget that the source of His power was His perfect submission to the will of God. We read over the passages that talk about His long nights of solitary prayer. We puzzle over the verse that says He learned obedience from the things He suffered, about which, it says, He offered up prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears (Heb. 5: 7-8). Do we think somehow that obedience for Him was easier than it is for us? Do we imagine that humility was easy for Him who had known the glories of heaven from all eternity?

At least for me, I fear the more overt manifestations of resurrection power would prove to be too heady. It is my flesh that wants to be flashy, even in the spiritual realm. I take comfort in the testimony of Paul who, because of the greatness of all that had been revealed to him by God, was given a "thorn in the flesh" to keep him from exalting himself (and he repeats that reason twice, see 2 Cor. 12:7). Despite his asking three times, God saw fit not to remove it from him. What He said to him was, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness" (v.9).

So are we, when we ask for more power, really asking for more of whatever produces humility and weakness in us? For more of whatever drives us to the throne of grace, with loud cries and tears? And if so, do we dare to ask for it? None of us would knowingly ask for more hardships, trials, infirmities or temptations. But in them, as they present themselves in our lives, we may surely ask for His power to be perfected in our weakness. It is the crack in the earthen vessel that allows the light inside to be seen.