

Bill Johnson: Go Forth in Supernatural Power

As members of Christ's body, we have Jesus' DNA. So why isn't His power working through us?

I once heard a story about a pastor who wanted to help with the building of his church's new sanctuary. He had none of the construction skills needed, but he was willing to work at any job he was given.

So the contractor assigned him to cut 100 2-by-4 boards, each into 6-foot lengths. Doing this would save time for the carpenters—when they showed up for work the next day they could get right to work with the newly cut wood.

The pastor carefully measured the first board to the exact length and cut it with precision. But instead of using his tape measure to determine where he would cut the second board, he laid the first board on top of the second one, made his mark and cut. He then took the newly cut second board and laid it on the third board, drew his line and cut. He continued measuring like this until all 100 boards were cut.

Having no construction experience, the pastor did not know that using a previously cut board as the measurement for the next length would result in the cut mark on the new board being about 1/8 inch beyond where it should be. That extra length wasn't so bad when the pastor was cutting the second board. But after he used this method for every succeeding measurement, the last board was well more than 7 feet long. In the end, the work was useless to the builder. The next morning the carpenters had to recut the boards the pastor had worked so hard on the night before.

Ministry is often done the same way. As long as we measure our lives and service by the previous generation, we are able to

consider ourselves biblically sound and successful. But when we go back to the original standard set 2,000 years ago, we find quite a difference between Jesus and ourselves.

Power Now

Jesus *commanded* His disciples to be clothed with power. He *commanded* them to heal the sick, raise the dead, cast out devils and cleanse lepers. To see how far we have drifted since then, consider this: 2,000 years ago all sickness was considered to be from the devil. Although Jesus didn't heal everyone who was sick in that day, He did heal and deliver *all* who came to Him.

Today many in the church think God gives sickness to teach us endurance to make us better Christians. An even greater number would say He allows it because He has a divine purpose in the process of our dealing with infirmity.

Sadly, many Old Testament verses—none of which Jesus used as a model for His ministry—are used to support this way of thinking. For 2,000 years many lives have been “cut” as the wood was by the pastor—by using the wrong measurement, the wrong standard.

Anything you think you know about God that you can't find in the person of Jesus, you have reason to question. Jesus is the standard—the clear revelation and manifestation of the Father. In Him, the nature and heart of God are clearly seen.

People have told me that miracles are not the whole gospel. And that is true. But neither is the gospel whole without them.

I'm astonished that the high point of celebration for the church is often when we accomplish something that's humanly possible. We build buildings, organize missions trips, have mass gatherings. But many great service organizations with no faith in God accomplish the same things.

I will agree—most of our endeavors not only are good but also necessary. But it isn't until we break into the realm of impossibilities that we give an accurate demonstration of God's power: the power of resurrection.

When the Spirit of the resurrected Christ took up residence in our bodies, all of heaven positioned itself to see what we would conquer in His name. Resurrection power is in our nature, in our spiritual DNA. When we were born again, we received the same spiritual DNA as Jesus. His resurrection power now is to dwell in us through the Holy Spirit. Nothing short of experiencing His resurrection power should ever satisfy the hungry believer.

Pursue the Mandate

How do we get this kind of power? In Acts they either cried out to God until He showed up and baptized them or they had someone with the power lay hands on them and pray. (Often, the person who wants only to get things directly from God will receive power through impartation from another person; conversely, those who tend to want impartation from a man will often have to receive this blessing only by crying out to God.)

The point is, we are not to quit the pursuit until we are able to demonstrate the power of God, for this power testifies that Jesus is raised from the dead.

Power upon us has the purpose of making us witnesses of the resurrected Christ! Power demonstrates that Jesus conquered sin, death, hell and the grave. All things are now subject to this one who sits at the right hand of the Father. The Resurrection is the reality on which the entire gospel rests. "If Christ is not risen ... we are found false witnesses. ... You are still in your sins!" (1 Cor. 15:14-17). This power makes us witnesses of the Resurrection, central to salvation.

A pastor once gave me a tape from a well-known speaker, but

warned me: "Be careful. He doesn't believe that the gifts of the Spirit are for today." I have no problem with such warnings, especially when they deal with the primary doctrines of the church. But when was the last time someone gave you a book or a recorded message while warning you: "His teaching is good, but be careful—this man has never raised the dead."

We value concepts above experience. And resurrection power is to be our experience that we share with others. This charge is not so we can see who gets the most miracles or attracts the biggest crowds. It is to fulfill His commission to go forth in power, giving witness of the resurrected Christ. This is the privilege and mandate of every believer.

Bill Johnson is senior pastor of Bethel Church in Redding, Calif. He is the author of numerous books, including *When Heaven Invades Earth*, *Face to Face With God* and his newest, *Center of the Universe*, all of which reflect his conviction that a gospel without spiritual power is not the gospel Jesus preached.