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MEDITATION SCRIPTURES

HOW TO BEGIN

"But to as many as did receive and welcome Him He gave the authority (power, privilege, right) to become the children of God". (John 1:12Amplified)

WHY? - IT IS THE FATHER'S WILL

"He rules for ever by His power, His eyes watch the nations..."(Psalm 66:7)

"For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him". (2 Chronicles 16:9)

"He saved them for His name's sake, to make His mighty <u>power</u> known". (Psalm 106:8)

JESUS HAS MADE THE WAY

"He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death – even death on a cross! Therefore God has exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name...and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord". (Philippians 2:8-11)

"You have granted Him authority (<u>power</u>) over all people that he might give eternal life..."(John 17:2)

1. The Spoken Word of the Lord

God made the earth by His power; He founded the world by His wisdom and stretched out the heavens by His understanding. (Jeremiah 10:12)

God said "Let there be...light, firmament, dry ground, seed-bearing plants, lights in the firmament, living creatures in the sky and in the sea, living creatures on the land," and His words created, out of a void, what He spoke. After all this He created His best, Man, to be IN HIS IMAGE. God intended that His man would do what He does – create. (Genesis 1:3,6,9,11,14,20,24&26)

God told Adam to name the living creatures. He expected Adam to be creative in this task. Speaking out the names defined the nature of them, just as when we name our children we have reasons for choosing these names, which that child's nature and character traits will, from that time, always belong to that name.

This is the pattern that God set from the beginning, by His choice and His excellent will. Of course God wanted it to always be good, but the source of goodness is God Himself so there must always be a spiritual connection to Him for creative goodness. We can do no good thing without His power. (Romans 7:18) It is God's power that is the creative power. (Isaiah 40:26) God, and His chosen "human" representative, His Son, also sustain all things by His powerful word. (Hebrews 1:3)

Jesus' conception and birth were by the power of the Holy Spirit and the word of the heavenly messenger. (Luke 1:35) He was acknowledged by a word from Heaven as God's Son. (Luke 3:22)

"So that you may know the Son of Man has authority (power) on earth to forgive sins...then He <u>said</u>... (Matthew 9:6)...and they praised God, who had given such authority to <u>men</u>." All who witnessed the man's healing knew that what Jesus had just done was for all who follow Him to do. Jesus Himself expressed this. "Anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing." (John 14:12)

Jesus KNEW God's word intimately. As the Son of Man, it was His During His time in the wilderness it was His food, His lifeblood. protection and His focus. He knew the devil always tries to get our focus off God's word just as he did with Eve. Some people like to say that the Bible was written down by men and it is true that it has been translated by men, but we have to make a choice whether it is God's word, complete and absolute, even if we do not understand everything vet. This is a faith step, our very first step to decide that God's word is reliable and though our rational (but vulnerable) minds might argue, just as Eve's did, His way is ALWAYS best. The Bible says about itself, "all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness..." (2 Timothy 3:16) "The word of God is living 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) King David acknowledges that God has exalted above all things His Name and His word. (Psalm 138:2) "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning." (John 1:1&2) He became flesh and lived among us. (John 1:4) Jesus was the living word of God. He testified that He only did and said what His

Father wanted. John the Baptist also testified, "The One whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in His hands." (John 3:34835)

The spoken word of God, the living word of God and the written word of God are all one, and when this is acknowledged and acted upon everything is in alignment with God's will and purposes. When we are "in Christ" we are in the wisdom of God and the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:24&30)

When Jesus spoke, God's will came into being. "His word was with power." (Luke 4:32) "Follow Me" was irresistible. The response was immediate. (Mark 1:18 and 2:14) "With power He commanded evil spirits." (Luke 4:36) "Be quiet, come out of him" to a demon and the demon had to obey, even though it put up a fight. (Mark 1:25) "Be clean" and there was immediate healing. (Mark 1:41&42) "Get up, take your mat and walk" and a man who had not walked for years was immediately able to do so. (Mark 2:11) This continued throughout Jesus' three years of ministry. Then towards the end He makes His extraordinary statement. "ANYONE who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12) In the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus' work will continue, because Jesus, the Word of God, has said so.

Speaking out the written word is our protection against the devil. Jesus spoke the written word each time He was tempted. (Luke 4:4, 8&12) The devil likes to misquote it so we need to be vigilant. If we have been created to speak God's will into this world we must take great care what we say. Jesus said, "By your words you will be acquitted, and by your

words you will be condemned". (Matthew 12:37) There is also a warning in the Old Testament. "He gave them what they asked for..."(Psalm 106:15) (2 Kings 6:31). This is why Jesus rebuked the disciples in the storm. (Mark 4:38-40)

The Bible says that death and life are in the power of the tongue. (Proverbs 18:21) Paul says he commends himself as a servant of God in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God. (2 Corinthians 6:6&7) Jesus warned the disciples, "things that come out of the mouth come from the heart". (Matthew 15:18) If we are speaking wrongly we should examine our hearts for bad attitudes to others or to God.

2. The Power in the Name

"No one is like you, O LORD; you are great, and your name is mighty in power. Who should not revere you, O king of the nations? This is your due." (Jeremiah 10:6)

"By faith in the Name of Jesus, this man...was made strong. It is Jesus' Name and the faith that comes through Him that has given this complete healing." (Acts 3:16)

Jesus' humility and submission to His Father earned Him a promotion. This was not just any promotion but "God exalted Jesus to the highest place and gave Him the Name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth..." (Philippians 2:9810) There is therefore nothing in the

whole world that can be greater than the Name of Jesus, by God's own decree. This Name is not <u>a</u> name, one of many, but a very specific "the" Name, exclusive, because of the power within that name. Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved. (Joel 2:32 & Romans 10:13) We have quoted the prophecy because everything is <u>fulfilled</u> in Jesus. If this promise seems too simplistic it is because there is a lie circulating in the world that we have to earn our salvation in some way. A very subtle way is asking people to do courses to "understand" the gospel. It is plain that no one can know the things of God without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:14) But, by God's decree, the Name of Jesus has all the power necessary to save, not just from sin but also from sickness or any other inferior name. What a powerful Name!

In the heavenlies there are powers and authorities that belong to Satan's kingdom. (Ephesians 6:12) These bombard us all the time with temptations to fail. This is exactly the same as caused Eve to sin, and Satan is so satisfied with his strategies that he continues to try them out on ignorant and unsuspecting humans. Young people think it will be OK to try drugs and sex, old men (and young ones) think another drink will be OK. Governments are wasting money on get-off-drugs schemes and alcohol programmes, but the Name of Jesus is greater than all these ideas. As we write this book, there have been "natural" disasters of fire, flood and earthquake that have ruined lives and property that God's beloved people have worked for years to develop as a blessing for their families and others.

On the earth this Name overcomes our "enemies". There should be no necessity to go to war against other humans. They have no power except by the Enemy who is already defeated by the Cross. James explains this very plainly. "You do not have, because you do not ask God." (James 4:2) This is not to say that you should not defend yourself or your country, but the power is available if we develop our faith to be able to believe that it is possible. With God everything is possible, but our faith levels limit our receiving from God all we need. When we really believe that God is good all the time and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him, not only are we pleasing God, (Hebrews 11:6) but nothing will be impossible for us. (Matthew17:20)

This Name is greater than things under the earth. We cannot even begin to comprehend what this could mean if our faith in God's goodness and love was strong. So many people ask us in our ministry, "where was God when my (loved one) died?" Jesus cried when Lazarus was in the grave, and went and raised him to life. The devil holds the power of death (Hebrews 2:14) but Jesus, by His death, destroyed the devil's power and freed those who were held in slavery by fear of death. Death is a great enemy unless we are confident that our loved one has left his/her old and worn-out body behind to receive a glorious body in Paradise. (1 Corinthians 15:42-44) When Jesus went down into the grave and conquered death He took the keys (the power) from the devil. (Revelation 1:18) If the Son sets you free you are free indeed. (John 8:36) It is recorded that when Jesus gave up His Spirit on the Cross the earth shook and the tombs broke open as people who had died were raised to life. (Matthew 27:51) The Apostle Paul describes the incomparably great

power God exerted when He raised Jesus from the dead but there must also have been enormous power as Jesus went into the realm of death to take those keys from the devil, demonstrated by the raising to life of people who were already dead and buried. We tend to think of facts rather than the dynamics of God's actions. However we get the word "dynamite" from the word for God's power. There is enormous power in an indestructible life. Jesus is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because He always lives to intercede for them. (Hebrews 7:16&25)

3. The Power of the Cross

"Once you were alienated from God and were enemies...but now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation..." (Colossians 1:21&22)

Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. (Hebrews 9:22) Therefore why is forgiveness so important that Jesus died such a painful death to bring this about?

God is a holy God, a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:29) The Israelites at Mount Sinai were so terrified that they told Moses to speak to God for them. God's holiness would consume all the sin that we "wear, like a filthy garment". It is easy to be "religious" with God, deceiving ourselves that our worship is pleasing Him. But when we approach Him as a little child, and allow Him to discipline us, replacing our heart of stone with a soft heart, which longs to please a wonderful Heavenly Daddy, we

demonstrate humility. (Hebrews 12:4-13) "This is what Almighty God says, 'I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit..." (Isaiah 57:15) Jesus spoke a warning to those who "honour Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men." (Matthew 15:889)

Jesus spoke to His disciples after the Greeks came searching for Him. He came to His own (Jewish people) but they did not receive Him. (John 1:11) He knew He was to be a Light to the Gentiles (Luke 2:32) and was God's seed to be sown into the earth for the great harvest of souls. (John 12:24) When He was lifted up from the earth He would draw all men to Himself. This not only showed by what way He would die, but also His resurrection and ascension to Heaven. He said, "It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you." (John 16:7)

The problem of sin had to be dealt with, so that fellowship with the Father could be restored. The punishment of death was not just physical but spiritual. Adam and Eve were sent from God's presence, because in His Presence is eternal life, but a corrupted body would age and die. God conceived that if the punishment was paid there was no need for separation from Him, but only a sinless person could die for the sin of the whole world. Not only was relationship with God now possible but also eternal life in His presence, in this world and for ever. Because of the Cross and acceptance that this is God's way to Him, everything that was potential in Eden is also possible today. Imagine walking with God in the cool of the day, talking to Him as Heavenly Father, giving Him a hug and "looking to Him to be radiant", so conscious

of His love and affection, just soaking in His love. This is all a reality because of the Cross. Jesus enjoyed this fellowship with His Father when He went out to pray. This must have been why he was so anguished when the Father forsook Him when He was on the Cross. His whole source of life was absent.

Once we have received this gift of God He sees us as He has designed us to be, perfected in Christ. We become more Christ-like because God is working in us. "He who has begun His good work will bring it to completion in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:6) Our challenge is not to resist the training of the Holy Spirit but to renew our minds to His ways.

It is possible to empty the Cross of its power. (1 Corinthians 1:17) The Apostle Paul warns the Corinthians who are arguing about who to follow and how to be baptised. These practices are based on human wisdom, but this is not the gospel. He has already said that the gospel is the POWER of God for the salvation of everyone who believes — Jew and Gentile. (Romans 1:16) If our relationship depends on where or how we worship God, or any other humanly conceived works, our salvation has become dependent on us and not on the Cross of Christ, the shed blood of a sinless man who paid the ultimate price, death, which God required. Although knowledge of the facts, the words of the Bible, is important, the writer to the Hebrews speaks of moving on from the elementary teachings to maturity. (Hebrews 6:1) Peter writes to make every effort to add to our faith goodness, knowledge (intimacy), self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. If you possess

these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive. (2 Peter 1:5-8)

The power of the Cross is a new creation; the old life has gone and the new has come. All this is from God who reconciled us to Himself. God made Jesus who had no sin to be a sin offering for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:17-21)

The message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18)

4. The Power in Jesus, by the Holy Spirit

John's testimony was that the one on whom the Holy Spirit came upon and remained is the Son of God. (John 1:33) It is interesting that King David "understood" this concept when he begged that God would not take His Holy Spirit from him. (Psalm 51:11) Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35), but it is recorded that He did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. (Philippians 2:6&7) He was given the Holy Spirit to do the works of service, just as we are. "In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ". (Colossians 2:9) The full strength of the Holy Spirit is the same as the full strength of God Himself. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are listed for our benefit; wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, tongues, and interpretation. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. All these qualities Jesus had in full measure. Because He had these in full measure, even though tempted, He did not sin even though He was fully human. Knowing God's heart and His word and being faithful to obey this, being conscious that He was the Living Word, gave Him the strength to say "no" to Satan, even in difficult circumstances. Sin is primarily disobedience to God but Jesus agreed with and obeyed His Father in everything.

Not only did being FULL of the Holy Spirit enable Jesus to live in God's power and presence, but enabled Him to do the works of God. Through the Spirit of holiness He was declared with power to be the Son of God. (Romans 1:4) Jesus testified that He was God's Son (John 10:36) and that He did what His Father does. "I do nothing on my own but speak just what my Father has taught me". (John 8:28) "The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing His work". (John 14:10) At first even His enemies recognised that the works Jesus was doing could only be done by God. (Mark 2:7) As their antipathy increased they attributed His works to the devil because Jesus had power that the devil did not have. In their limited experience only the devil could "withdraw" the ugly, destructive problems he had put upon those who gave him opportunity to attack. This is why Jesus told them that their father was the devil. (John 8:44) He really cared that they were deceived, because He had come for the House of Israel.

The power of God by the Holy Spirit gave Jesus a confidence to be and to do all that God had called Him to. "Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, and that He had come from God and was returning to God". (John 13:3) When various incidents happened He knew, by the Holy Spirit, where they fitted in God's plan for Him. People were amazed at His wisdom and His teaching but all of this was inspired by the Holy Spirit. His personal experience was why He could tell His disciples that the Spirit of truth would guide them into all truth. (John 16:13)

Yet even Jesus had to wait on the Father for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Luke makes the comment that the power of the Lord was present to heal. (Luke 5:17) Jesus repeatedly said that he did what the Father was doing. He was guided by compassion and love. Faith works by love. His belief in His mission and His relationship with His Father was a safe guide to doing what His heart told Him to do. He also understood what Paul is teaching in Ephesians. He had a responsibility to pass on His skills to another generation. He not only equipped His disciples but also 72 other disciples who were apparently eager to learn. (Luke 9:1 and Luke 10:3) He conferred the necessary authority so that they too could do His work. "I have given you power..." (Luke 10:19) This did not seem to continue while Jesus was on the earth, so it was a taste of what was to come when the Holy Spirit came after Pentecost. The Holy Spirit would not just come "on" God's servants, but would "abide" in those who "abide" in Him. (John 15:5-7) Jesus' promise was that we would bear much fruit and that everything we asked for would be given to us. There are no exclusions here; this seems to be an open-ended offer, especially if we believe that with God all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26 & Mark 10:27) In Jesus' prayer He prays for those who will believe in Him through their message and He has given them the glory that the Father gave Him. (John 17:20&22)

5. The Power in the Anointing

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and...He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him. (Acts10:38)

I pray that He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ (the Anointed One and His anointing) may dwell in your hearts through faith. (Ephesians 3:17)

Jesus was the Anointed One prophesied in the Old Testament, and acknowledged by Peter in the New Testament. (Acts 10:38) The pouring of oil on any person or thing was done to consecrate to God, setting apart for God's own use, especially as a witness unto holiness. symbolic in action, belief and commitment to this act validated it in God's sight. Yet, because it is symbolic, only faith can operate this action in the earth. Though Saul, David and Solomon, kings of the Old Testament, were anointed with oil to designate their reign, it is interesting that the kings after Solomon were not recorded as being anointed as king. Considering their behaviour, had it become a political or inherited exercise rather than a dedication to God's own people to rule them faithfully under His guidance? The word used to describe each king's taking of the throne of David is "became". Without this dedication to God there seems to be no consciousness or commitment to a responsibility which can only be done in His strength. It is as if God Himself confers the anointing on the one who dedicates him/herself to any work to which God has called us.

The real meaning of the Anointing, then, is God's favour and equipping for whatever is on His heart to be done in the earth. God is

Spirit and needs a body to carry out His works. He could do it sovereignly but He has chosen to give His authority on this earth to His Man.

The Scriptures tell us that we are chosen in Christ (and the anointing) before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. (Ephesians 1:3) God has a vast employment list and has the power to create the employees. He puts them in families, countries and cultures, gives them assorted gifts and interests and training. There are practical works and intellectual works, and each one of His elect then need to find their "calling". As explained in 1 Corinthians, all are important in His sight. (1 Corinthians 12:12-26) What should be very important to us is that God shows no favouritism. A lowly job is as valuable in God's scheme of things as a highly paid position which has brought power and eminence.

This is where the church in particular has fallen very short. In our experience the leaders have forgotten this and often promote and protect themselves. This must be one reason why the church has lost credibility in the community. We can read, from the examples of the Old Testament kings, what God thinks of this situation.

Christ (the Anointed One and His anointing) is the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1 Corinthians 1:24) The Anointing, then, is, effectively, God at work in His world. God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him...will have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him. (John 3:16&17) In the communities are those who are condemned already because they just do not know how simple

God has made it to be saved. BELIEVE and RECEIVE. That's all. There is nothing about training courses, nothing about joining a church, and certainly nothing about earning God's favour through good deeds, which the average person outside the Kingdom of God thinks. We are the aroma of Christ, either the smell of death to those who are perishing and the fragrance of life to those who are being saved. (2 Corinthians 2:15&16) Our competence comes from God. We are ministers of a New Covenant – not of the letter which kills but of the Spirit which gives life. (2 Corinthians 3:5&6)

"Dear children, you have an Anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. The anointing you received from Him remains in you (as you remain in Him)". (1 John 2:20&27) This anointing enables us to resist sin and to "shine like stars in a crooked and depraved generation." (Philippians 2:15) We become a powerful witness to the power of the Gospel to change lives and fill our hearts with the love of God which is the evidence that we are born-again and are children of God.

In the day of salvation burdens will be lifted and yokes will be broken because we have become so "anointed" that the glory is pouring out of us. (Isaiah 10:27) Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars. (Daniel 12:3) This was Jesus' great comfort as He went through the horrors of the Crucifixion. After the suffering of His soul, He will see the light and be satisfied. (Isaiah 53:11) God showed Him a picture of what would be the result of justifying many. When they walked in the righteousness and glory that He had won for them they would shine like the sun. Jesus mentions this when He explains the parable of the weeds. (Matthew 13:43) This is truly "Christ in you, the hope of glory". (Colossians 1:27)

6. The Power of Faith in God

"Faith rests not on man's wisdom, but on God's power." (1 Corinthians 2:5)

"If anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him". (Mark 11:23)

"...constantly pray...that God may count you worthy of His calling, and that by His power He may fulfil every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith." (2 Thessalonians 1:11)

The disciples were amazed that the fig tree that Jesus had cursed had withered in response to His command. Jesus' response is to have faith in God. These things are possible if you have faith in God. Because anything is possible for God we cannot comprehend this act of Jesus or His response with our natural minds. We know and believe that God can do anything he wants, but this is not strictly true. God does nothing without revealing it to His prophets. (Amos 3:7) Everything that God has done and that Jesus did fulfilled the Law and the **Prophets**. In this story Micah had prophesied that there were "no early figs that I crave". (Micah 7:1) The figs represent the House of Israel. They were all living in disobedience to God, who loved them and cared for The context is headed "The Lord's case against Israel" and Jesus' hearers would know the Prophet's writing. This act of Jesus was another attempt to warn the House of Israel, to whom He had come to save, of their judgment but at the same time He demonstrates what taking God seriously will do for "those who have ears to hear", which was a statement He said quite often. When we understand the precedents that God has ordained that have been fulfilled through

Jesus' ministry we ought to be doing the same. Jesus has already told His followers that anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. (John 14:12)

This kind of faith is a demonstration of our love for Jesus. (John 14:23) It is also a demonstration of our belief that Jesus' commission to His "church" is a continuing work "to the very end of the age". (Matthew 28:18-20) Jesus said on one occasion, "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8) Everything in God's kingdom is done by faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God. (Hebrews 11:6) As defined, "faith is being sure of what we hope for" (Hebrews 11:1) and being "certain of what we do not see." When we "purpose", persevere, continue steadfastly to believe God for something, confident that God's word has promised us what we desire, faith actually creates this to become a reality. When it is a reality we no longer need faith because we can see what we have prayed for. It is our responsibility to bring into our world the blessings that God gives us a passion for, by faith. The power of faith is therefore a creative force to bring good and to deal with evil. The "mountain" is something which blocks what we consider is a blessing, so we are authorised by Jesus to speak against it in faith until it is removed. "The sea" is where all our iniquities have been sent. (Micah 7:19) Again Jesus is reminding His hearers of the Prophet's writing. "Who is a God like You, who pardons and forgives the transgression of the remnant of His inheritance?" (Micah 7:18) This is why Jesus goes on to warn about unforgiveness as a blockage to development of great faith or the faith of God. This extraordinary wisdom and knowledge must have enraged those who wanted to be

considered "wise" in the sight of the people. "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate". (1 Corinthians 1:19 and Isaiah 29:14) Faith is based on the revelation of God and works only by His power.

Daniel's story demonstrates powerfully what faith in God can do. When hard times came and Daniel ended up in a foreign culture, he chose to trust God and was rewarded.

"God gave to these four young men knowledge and understanding". (Daniel 1:17) He was given a gift by God to deal with a dangerous situation and God gave him the revelation he needed to save his own life and the lives of the other wise men. Daniel's faith in His God overflowed in thankfulness and praise and acknowledgement from the king that Daniel's God is God of gods and Lord of kings. "Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are His. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things". (Daniel 2:20)

On another occasion Daniel's friends were in a dangerous situation and decided to trust God even through the trial. They were so confident of God's trustworthiness that they were able to say:

"The God we serve is able to save us...and He will rescue us from your hand, O king." (Daniel 3:17) When Daniel was thrown into the lion's den, through his faith in God he was not touched by the lions. This made a great impact on King Darius who made a public acknowledgement: "He is the Living God and He endures for ever...He rescues and He saves; He performs signs and wonders in the heavens and on the earth. He has rescued Daniel from the power of the lions." (Daniel 6:26&27)

These stories have set precedents. If God has done these acts through the faith of these followers He will do them again because nothing is impossible to God.

God does not differentiate between what we might call small things and big things. When we were younger in the church, people used to tell us that they only prayed for the "big" things because God was too busy for the small things. The list of faith acts in Hebrews 11 is a great range including better sacrifices, building an ark, believing for a child when physically it was impossible, blessing and prophesying over one's children, acknowledging publicly that one is in the family of God even though it might bring persecution, walking around a wall in obedience, welcoming strangers, conquering kingdoms, administering justice, shutting the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, escaped the edge of the sword, and receiving back the dead who had been raised to life again. Also included are unpleasant things like jeers and floggings, imprisonment, stoning and grisly deaths, poverty, ill-treatment and homelessness. Everything is for the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Quite a long time ago one of us was at a church and a friend and prayer partner wanted to visit someone in hospital. I did not want to go but she was insistent so I said I would drive her, with the proviso that if there was no parking spot outside I would not come in. You guessed it – there was a spot right outside so I went in with her. We prayed with her and she was delivered of a demon which came out with a scream. The result of this was that the pastor was furious with me because her husband complained, so I complained to God. God spoke to me about trusting Him but the situation was not resolved for 5 months. This was

very hard but the woman we had prayed for was quite whole again because God had restored her mind in response to our faith.

7. The Power in Us who Believe

"The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes". (Romans 1:16)

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know...the incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when he raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, 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 age to come. (Ephesians 1:18-21)

This book began because we were reading about Elisha and asking God if these acts of faith can happen today. His ministry was truly amazing. He was so confident of God's anointing that, after serving Elijah and meeting the challenges that Elijah placed upon him he asked for and expected a double anointing. (2 Kings 2:9) The prophet, Elisha, spoke and whatever he said on the Lord's behalf came to pass (2 Kings 2:21-22, 24; 3:17; 4:3-7, 16&17,: 41, 43&44; 5:10, 27; 6:17) and what he did by faith also came to pass. (2 Kings 4:33-35; 6:6)

Elijah had called Elisha when he was about his normal work after God had instructed him that Elisha was His chosen successor. (1 Kings 19:16&19) Elisha burned up his past life and became Elijah's attendant. He would have associated with the prophets as Elijah did, and seen and heard the confident prophecies which came to pass. He would also

have seen the persecution and the mockery. When it became time for Elijah to go to heaven there were some tests for Elisha. First he went to Bethel, the "church" of the time, where all the prophets met. Next he went to Jericho, the place where the Israelites had a miraculous victory because they fought their battle according to God's instructions only. Thirdly he went to the Jordan. This represented death (to self) but entry into the Promised Land, where the Israelites would work with God to accomplish His purposes to bring about His Kingdom. When they had crossed over with Joshua they had consecrated themselves and followed the priests into the river which stopped flowing as soon as the Ark went into the edge of the water.

"God did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD (YHWH) is <u>powerful</u> and so you might always fear (reverence) the LORD your God". (Joshua 4:24)

After Elisha had gone across the Jordan on dry ground with Elijah he told Elijah he wanted a double portion of his spirit. Elijah prophesied that Elisha must see him when he is taken up. It is interesting that God sees the heart of a person and knows the longing. As we read this story we wanted God to tell us what is required for this double anointing of Elisha in this present day. There are always challenges if we seek the greater gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:31) Elisha's challenge was to see how Elijah departed to heaven. This is why he <u>called out</u> a description of Elijah's departure. He was claiming the promise of Elijah and of God with words that created for him what he had asked for. Immediately he tried out his new gift and the water divided just as it had done for Elijah on the way

across. All the prophets watching him could see that the spirit of Elijah was on Elisha and his ministry was confirmed. (2 Kings 2:15)

This began a series of extraordinary miracles, from prophetic speaking and words of knowledge, which gave rise to things which just cannot happen in the natural. In many ways they were even more extraordinary than those which Jesus did, yet it is the same Spirit and the will of God that instigated them. He had confidence in his calling and in the loving and caring heart of God for many of the miracles but also was conscious of the judgment of God for any wrong action.

There are so many promises in the Bible to encourage us that God wants us to do His work in His power and in His way. We seem to have learnt the Bible as a historical book rather than as a manual for living God's way. At many Bible studies we learn the theory of Christianity rather than the radical practice, as demonstrated by Jesus and the Apostles who had "turned the world upside down". (Acts 17:6) Those who are not born again by the Spirit of God are worldly. It is even possible for "infants in Christ" to be worldly (1 Corinthians 3:1), but certainly those who are not in the family of God think and act as Satan's puppets because he is a ruthless master. "Everything in the world – the cravings of the sinful man, the lust of the eyes and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world." (1 John 2:16) By the Holy Spirit we are filled with Jesus' nature.

"I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord..." (Micah 3:8)

Paul's commission was to "open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God..." (Acts 26:18) He is acknowledging that Satan does have power but God's is greater.

"Greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world". (1 John 4:4) He wrote to Timothy, "God has...given us a Spirit of power". (2 Timothy 1:7) He became "a servant of the gospel...through the working of His power". (Ephesians 3:7) He overflowed with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit and prayed that his readers would too. (Romans 15:13) All his preaching was not wise and persuasive words, (which seems to be how most modern evangelism is done) but with demonstrations of the Spirit's power. (1 Corinthians 2:4). (We visited a church once and heard the preacher actually mock an evangelist who demonstrates the Spirit's power). Paul wrote, "I will not speak of anything except what Christ (the anointing) has accomplished through me...by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit". (Romans 15:18&19) Paul also wrote, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes..." (Romans 1:16) and "the Kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power". (1 Corinthians 4:20) To the Thessalonians he wrote, "that by His power He may fulfil every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith". (2 Thessalonians 1:11) It is plain that God knows our weaknesses and yet He has chosen us to be His ambassadors. He makes His appeal to those outside the Kingdom through us. (2 Corinthians 5:20) His treasure, Jesus, is entrusted to "jars of clay", but in His wisdom this demonstrates that the allsurpassing power is from God and not from us. (2 Corinthians 4:7) In another place he speaks of the power of God as made perfect in weakness. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

There is such an abundance of Biblical promises as to God's intentions that we should be His witnesses that we cannot escape the conclusion that He will do immeasurably more than all we ask or

imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, for His glory, for ever. (Ephesians 3:20)

8. The Power in Hearing and Acting

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. If we know he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we ask of Him. (1 John 5:14&15)

"All power (authority) in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore <u>go</u> and make disciples..." (Matthew 28:18&19) The first question to ask is "was this only for the Apostles?" Since Jesus goes on to say that He would be with us to the very end of the age this must mean that every disciple has this responsibility. The story of the lost sheep shows that Jesus places great value on searching for it. (Luke 15:3-7) It is worth searching for, even at the expense of all the others. There is another mystery in this story. The searched-for sheep is likened to one who repents and the others are righteous and do not need to repent. "Repent" means "to change your mind and go in a different direction". It could be that the lost sheep was lost because it did not conform and wanted to go its own way but the others were happy to conform but not necessarily by deliberate choice; more by taking the easy way. The encounter with the loving Shepherd filled the sheep's heart with love at being rescued and that rejoicing was matched in Heaven.

Jesus tells another parable about those who love much compared to those who love less. (Luke 7:44-47) The woman who loved more did

everything she could to demonstrate her love and thankfulness to Jesus for rescuing her compared to the lazy and indifferent attitude of Simon, the Pharisee.

Many believers have not had a real encounter with the Shepherd, realising what He has done for us. We used to sing a song, "To get a touch from the Lord is so real..." Our relationship with the Father, through Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit needs to become a real, true-in-life relationship which is full of love and fellowship and a great longing to spread this abroad. The disciples were told: "Stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:49)

Also "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you". (Acts 1:8) The Holy Spirit is the touch from the Lord and all the fruit and all the gifts become available when we receive Him. However, "tools" that are not in use cannot be effective. Though we are sealed with the Holy Spirit when we first believed, Paul goes on to pray that the Ephesians would know the incomparably great power for us who believe. He says it is like the working of God's mighty strength which He exerted when He raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 1:19820)

It is obvious from the letter to the Laodiceans that God hates lukewarmness. (Revelation 3:16) He tells us to buy from Him gold refined in the fire. "Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness". (Malachi 3:3) He also tells us to buy white clothes to cover our nakedness. This is our wedding garment. (Matthew 22:11&12) The third recommendation is to buy salve for our eyes so that we can see. Paul prayed for the Ephesians that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in the inner being, so that

Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. He goes on, "I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how extensive is the love of Christ...to be FILLED to the measure of all the fullness of God". (Ephesians 3:16-19) Paul is praying that followers of Jesus would be effectively the SAME as Jesus, in whom the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form. (Colossians 2:9)

Our problem now is "can we believe such an extraordinary concept?" Stephen began his ministry as a server at table but he believed the words of Jesus and practised them. "Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs..."(Acts 6:8) Some people tried to argue with him but "they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke."

He was not one of the Apostles whom Jesus had originally commissioned — "Jesus appointed twelve that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach and to have power to drive out demons". (Mark 3:15) "Jesus ...gave the disciples power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases and He sent them..." (Luke 9:1&2) He might have been in the seventy-two, but we cannot know because they are unnamed, and he might have been in the upper room at Pentecost, because there were 120 people there to receive the Holy Spirit. He could well have been in the group of believers that devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching and to fellowship and prayer. (Acts 2:42) We do know that he did not count the cost but just obeyed the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said, "If you love Me you will obey what I command". (John 14:15) This statement follows on from Him saying, "Anyone who has faith in

Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father" (and will send the Holy Spirit).

How do we know when to act or what to do? This arises out of our personal relationship with Jesus and our level of faith. Our challenge is to develop "great faith" which is what Jesus commends. "My sheep listen to My voice". (John 10:27) If God has chosen us to be His agent of blessing He will back us up, because everything that He asks us to do is impossible without faith or in our own strength.

We have had a lot of practice as we travel the roads of NSW, having to speak to the fog, storms and the rain, having to pray ourselves across creeks, for the sun to stay in the sky longer and other "natural" problems. We found that it was good to practise in this way to develop our faith to have confidence to pray against cancers and other diseases. We have learnt to identify spiritual strongholds that are a heavy influence in a place. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8)

9. The Power of Inspired Imagination

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen". (Ephesians 3:20&21)

If faith is being sure of what we hope for then it is very necessary to hope. Sometimes we meet people who have no hope for a future and no expectations, for a better job, greater finances so that they can do more or achieve more, for a family or success. But this is quite unusual. Most people we talk to have great hopes but they do not know how to achieve them, even if they work harder and longer.

When God puts a dream, a hope in our hearts, He has a vested interest in helping us. After all, He has made us with different abilities, likes and dislikes and the main reason we are on this earth is to worship God and enjoy Him for ever (from the Westminster Confession). When we find our designated life plan for which God made us we also find fulfilment and true satisfaction. Many people blunder on through life, struggling to find this fulfilment which can only be found in fellowship with God, doing the works which He has prepared beforehand for us on this earth.

The first temptation the devil tried on was to convey that there is more satisfaction in achieving in our own strength. Many people boast that they are a self-made man (or woman). Some will attribute their success to "luck", but even these people would acknowledge that they <u>decided</u> what they wanted and went for it, some dishonestly, but many by sheer hard work. We can never deny the power of hard work but there is a valuable principle in the Old Testament. "Remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you the power to produce wealth, and so confirms His covenant." (Deuteronomy 8:18)

God's first covenant was with Noah. He promised there would always be seedtime and harvest. (Genesis 8:22) When we work, give, or create in cooperation with God there is always increase. A seed is planted, visualising a harvest and God brings the increase. He is very generous and takes pleasure in seeing His success brought about by our faith

and trust in Him. When Adam sinned his punishment was, "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food..." (Genesis 3:19) The wonderful thing that Jesus has done is to redeem us from this curse and restore access to God's presence.

God has made us very creative, in His image, so He expects us to visualise the dreams He has put in our hearts so that He can bring them to pass for us. He told Abraham to try to count the stars, so that Abraham could imagine the number of his offspring. (Genesis 15:5) The mistake Abraham made in fathering Ishmael, as a child of his flesh rather than waiting for the child of promise, helps us to understand waiting for God's timing for our vision to come to fruition. God even makes good our mistakes!

When Abraham sent his servant to obtain a wife for Isaac, Eliezer visualised a scenario whereby he would recognize the woman he was trusting God to find. God fulfilled the precise picture in response to Eliezer's faith. (Genesis 24:12-26)

We have already mentioned the definition of faith – the assurance of things hoped for. Hope is a desire which has not yet been fulfilled, but if we have visualised what we have faith for and have received God's promise that this is His will, it is already on its way. God's word says that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us – whatever we ask – we know that we have received what we ask of Him. (1 John 5:14&15)

"All Scripture is God-breathed (powered / inspired by the Spirit of God) and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16&17) When we read the Bible and take

and own God's promises, His Holy Spirit fires us up with ideas and longings and we begin to visualise how we can become involved in His work. There are so many suggestions.

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us." Prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing to the needs of others, leadership, showing mercy. (Romans 12:6-8) There are also manifestations of the Holy Spirit; wisdom, knowledge, faith (above the normal), healings, miraculous powers, discernment of spirits, tongues and interpretation. (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) Another group are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. (Ephesians 4:11) Any of these can apply in what we sometimes call secular work. This is a misnomer because when we are born again into God's family everything we do is for His glory and the extension of His Kingdom. God loves to speak, "Well done" into our hearts to encourage us.

When we conceive a dream in our hearts we can learn from how God taught Moses; "What is that in your hand?" (Exodus 4:2) We begin with what we can do, what we have faith to do in simple obedience. As we step out in faith and obedience God is such a patient teacher and a step of faith becomes a reality and we are ready to take another step. We are sure that Jesus' injunction to be like a little child is to ensure that we remain in this simple learning and wonderment mode all our lives. Once we "know it all" we have lost a childlike trust and dependence on God. Children are amazing because they have always got a new "want". It is a growth urge. The Bible has a helpful warning. "Where there is no vision (no redemptive revelation of God) the people perish". (Proverbs 29:18 Amplified) (NIV – people cast off restraint). When we choose to go our own

way and do not wish to cooperate with God we will wander aimlessly just as those who were sent out of the Garden of Eden were forced to do.

As we have talked to people in the streets there are many who are in this way, but also, in the power of the Anointing, many want to connect to God so they can experience God-given vision, according to the dreams they already have in their hearts.

10. Manifestation of the POWER of God

"You are my God, earnestly I seek you...I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory." (Psalm 63:1&2)

"You are awesome, O God, in your sanctuary; the God of Israel gives power and strength to His people." (Psalm 68:35)

"God came from Teman...His glory covered the heavens and His praise filled the earth. His splendour was like the sunrise; rays flashed from His hand, where His power was hidden". (Habakkuk 3:3&4)

From the beginning of the Bible God has demonstrated His power. Immediately after the creation there was no need. Everything was complete for Him and His Man to fellowship – until SIN came in. The intensity of the flood was a demonstration of His judgment power but Genesis is mainly about His love and care relationship with Abraham and his family. The first powerful demonstration of God's awesome power was at Sinai, where the people were so terrified they refused to approach God even when God gave them leave to do so. (Exodus 19:13 and

20:19) However there were 74 people who "saw the God of Israel". (Exodus 24:10)

There seem to be two ways to see God. When He manifests His power we revel in His glory and magnificence, showing Him honour and reverence, or we run from Him, in fear and even anger and revulsion. These two attitudes have continued to the present day.

Moses' acknowledgement to God was that "You have brought your people out of Egypt (and captivity) by your great power and your outstretched arm". (Deuteronomy 9:29) On the other hand, Pharaoh only saw God's power as judgment and an extreme inconvenience which he wanted removed, so his attitude was to placate God's representative, Moses. Because God is completely just He had Moses warn Pharaoh why He was sending these plagues. "I have raised you up (spared you) for this very purpose, that I might show you My power and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth". (Exodus 9:14-16) This Scripture is quoted by Paul (Romans 9:17). Our response to God's manifest power is so that He can show His mercy and grace.

King David loved God with all his heart. These are some of the things he said about God's power.

"Be exalted, O Lord, in your strength; we will sing and praise your might". (Psalm 21:13)

"I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory." (Psalm 63:2)

"So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you". (Psalm 66:2)
"Even when I am old...I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come". (Psalm 71:18) His acknowledgement of the

glorious power of God brought to himself all of God's grace, in revelation and experience of His love and faithfulness.

Peter put it this way. "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness..." (2 Peter 1:3) He also said, "We are shielded by God's power". (1 Peter 1:5)

Paul's advice was to "be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power" (Ephesians 6:10) and his prayer was that the Colossians would be "strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that they may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully give thanks to the Father..." (Colossians 1:11&12)

It is interesting that there are no direct references to God's power in James' Epistle. James was the leader in the early church and strongly valued his Jewish roots and its laws. His book is full of good advice on how a Christian should behave.

It is also interesting that Jesus, when He was talking to the Sadducees, told them that they were in error because they do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. (Matthew 22:29) Not knowing the power of God can lead to error. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection and Jesus wanted to warn them because the Resurrection of Jesus is God's greatest demonstration of His power. This is the measure that Paul wanted us to know so that we would work the ongoing works of Jesus. (Ephesians 1:19) If we do not know this power and we fall into law-keeping again we have lost sight of the grace of God and become alienated from Christ and the anointing He gave us to break yokes and remove burdens. (Galatians 5:5) Paul also warns Timothy of what will happen "in the last days". "People will be lovers of

themselves rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power". (2 Timothy 3:2&5)

The purpose of gathering together straight after Pentecost was fellowship and a consciousness of the continuing presence of Jesus, by the Holy Spirit, through the breaking of bread. (Acts 2:42) There was unity of purpose which is essential for the power to be evident and the result was that many wonders and miracles were done - and the Lord added daily those who were being saved. The power was so evident that Simon, the sorcerer, wanted to buy this power. (Acts 8:18&19) Paul encouraged the believers to be aware that the power of our Lord Jesus is present when they are gathered together. (1 Corinthians 5:4) This power is also authority by the Name of Jesus and His word will be accomplished. (Isaiah 55:11) WE, God's people are to enforce His will in the earth. This is what Jesus prophesied and subsequently empowered us to do. (Matthew 11:12) Yet this concept was not New Covenant because David glorified God in his prayer when people responded to the challenge to build the temple of God; "In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all". (1 Chronicles 29:12) David is proclaiming that acknowledging God and worshipping Him transfers His power to the worshipper. It makes no difference how weak we are. Paul maintained, "we are weak in Him, yet by His power we will live with Him to serve you". (2 Corinthians 13:4) Everything that is done in His name is for His glory but for our joy at His "well done".

As we focus on Him, look to Him and are radiant (Psalm 34:5), reflecting the Lord's glory (2 Corinthians 3:18) and shine like stars in the universe in a

crooked and perverse generation (Philippians 2:15) His power will be manifested more and more.

Jesus gave us our commission after the Resurrection, nearly 2000 years ago. "Go and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded". (Matthew 28:19&20) Just as the Father gave Adam authority over the world he lived in, Jesus has given us the authority but this time we have the authority to command the nations into the Kingdom of God, by His power. The angel to the church in Thyatira speaks out a promise – the words of the Son of God. "To him who overcomes and does My will to the end, I will give authority over the nations – just as I have received authority from My Father." (Revelation 2:26&27)

When we truly understand the power of the Resurrection we will be as overwhelmed by the power as Peter was when he wrote, "To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen". (1 Peter 4:11 & 5:11) It is recorded that every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea sing the same song, "To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, be praise and honour and glory and power, for ever and ever" and all the others in heaven said "Amen". (Revelation 5:13&14)

When Paul thought about his salvation and what the power of God had done for him he also was overwhelmed by the mercy and grace he could only write to Timothy: "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever". (1Timothy 1:17) And we say "AMEN".