**Power to Persevere**

*Ephesians 3:14-21*

**Introduction**

1. Some hesitate to obey the gospel because they fear failure to live as they are called.
2. Some obey the gospel only to fall away due to weakness and fear, and failure to find a source of strength.
3. Some fall short due to self-confidence instead of dependence upon God.
4. It is necessary to recognize salvation has two parts. ***“For by grace you have been saved through faith”* (Ephesians 2:8)**.
   1. Grace – salvation is possible because of the favor God bestows.
   2. Faith – salvation is attained by submitting to God in faith.
5. The Christian and His Challenge
6. Christian Growth

* Born again – **John 3:1-5** – becoming a Christian is a change from death to life. One has become a new creature, and they are to ***“walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4).***
* **1 Peter 1:22-23** – birth by water denotes baptism. Born again of the Spirit denotes the word (Spirit reveals God’s will.).
  + **1 Corinthians 4:15** – the apostle converted the Corinthians. He begot them through the gospel message.
* **This is only the beginning. A Christian is expected to strive for growth. 🡪**
  + **1 Peter 2:1-2** – Just as newborn babes desire milk, we as Christians are to desire the word. If we neglect ourselves the word we won’t grow!
  + ***“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).*** (This is not a suggestion, but a demand, and necessity.)
* The growth of a Christian has a standard. God is that standard 🡪
  + ***“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children” (Ephesians 5:1)***.
  + ***“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48)***.
  + ***“but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy” (1 Peter 1:15)***.
* While we strive for this growth there is one seeking to stunt our growth. 🡪

1. Satan Seeks to Destroy

* **1 Peter 5:8** – The devil seeks to devour us.
* This makes for a long and difficult journey 🡪
  + The apostles stated***, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22)***.
  + But these troubles are a necessary part of being a Christian – **James 1:2-4**

***In this struggle we must maintain remembrance that our part is faith, and that means we are not alone!***

1. The Divine Power to Persevere
2. God

* **1 Peter 1:3-5** – We are sustained by our hope of the inheritance, and kept by God’s power through faith.
  + He produces faith in man through the gospel (**cf. Romans 10:17**), and that ***“faith is the substance of things hoped for” (Hebrews 11:1).***
* ***“work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13)***.

1. Christ

* God has humbled Himself to provide the most effective aid. 🡪
* **Hebrews 4:14-16** – Jesus is our High Priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses and provides the perfect solution seeing that He overcame.
* **1 John 2:1-2** – He is our advocate for when we do sin. The perfect mediator between God and man. Our helper in time of need.
* ***“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13)***.
  + **He provides us with necessary strength to accomplish what God would have for us to do**.

1. Holy Spirit

* **Ephesians 1:13-14** – The Holy Spirit reveals the things of God so that we might live by them.
  + **Those who walk in the Spirit will receive the inheritance. God’s words of promise revealed by the HS are truth, and we can have assurance of the inheritance if we live accordingly.**

**The power to persevere is available to all. However, man has a part, and must fulfill that part to receive those powerful blessings from God.**

1. The Attaining of the Power
2. Crucified with Christ

* **Galatians 2:20** – We must live according to Christ’s example. By this He lives in us.
* **5:16-18, 24-25** – That life is one void of the works of the flesh. We must put away our former deeds!
* **Colossians 3:1-4** – When we were crucified with Christ we were raised with Him, and are expected to seek heavenly things, and set our minds continually upon them.

1. Captive to Christ

* Paul said the weapons of spiritual warfare bring ***“every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5*)**.
* **Colossians 3:16-17** – For our minds to be captive to Christ we must dwell on His word continually.

1. Prays through Christ

* **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** – Prayer is an indispensable tool given us by God. It is not a suggestion, but a command and expectation.
* **James 5:16** – Prayer is extremely effective. We must never downplay the importance of prayer! It must be a part of our lives if we seek to persevere to the end!

**Conclusion**

1. Becoming a Christian will be the best decision you’ve ever made.
2. Once that step is taken you must remember where the power to persevere is derived.
3. You must diligently strive each day to do what God has instructed, appealing to Him for the power to carry through!