

Acts 2

Get the power

How much power do we use in given day? In our town? Country? The whole world? An awful lot! However, you measure it, it has lots and lots of nothings, very big numbers. It's become a HUGE issue especially in the last year with costs going through the roof and supplies being disrupted because of the war in Ukraine and so on. We use electricity for all sorts of things, you only have to have a very short power cut and our lives are seriously disrupted. Just think what we use it for - heating, lighting, phones, TV, cooking, cleaning, travel and when you add in other forms of energy even renewables then we wouldn't get far (literally!) in our modern world without it. Power – our lives almost revolve around it.

But there is another kind of power that we rather like too. We like to have power over our lives, we like to make our own decisions, WE like to decide. Quite a while ago when Laura was little, her mum was working away from home for a while. She had been told by her mum that SHE was in charge - she was to keep the boys (ie Gavin and me) in order. Fine, until I suggested that it was really past her bedtime and that it was time for all 5 year olds to be in bed. “ No, Daddy” she said, “I am in charge” and as if there was no answer, she quoted her authority “Mummy said!” I don't think she was altogether convinced by my argument that “Yes, Mummy had put her charge of making sure that we all kept everything clean and tidy in the house but Daddy was still in charge of bedtimes”. Power – sometimes we push it too far. Sometimes, we don't just want what we need, we want more than other people. We may want control too.

A different power

Jesus is interested in power but there are two very significant differences to our kind of power. Where it comes from and what it is for.

1. From God

The power that Jesus wants us to have is **from God**. He gives it to us as a gift. We tend to think of power **belonging** to US but really the power is all God's. On the day of Pentecost, Peter and the other disciples were out on the streets and told everyone who would listen that Jesus was alive and risen from the dead, that he had defeated sin and death and was the Saviour of the world. And that the Holy Spirit, the power of God was working the lives of all those who trusted Jesus to enable them to proclaim and live out the message. Remember, it hadn't been long since Jesus' friends had run away and hidden from the authorities, thinking that they would be next to be arrested and put to death. The power that had raised Jesus from the dead came upon Jesus' friends to enable them to proclaim the good news. And that same power is available to US, to all of us who believe in Jesus. It isn't dependant on our age, or how clever we are, or what job we have, had or might get. It's all down to the power GOD gives us. As we trust Jesus, he will give us the power of the Holy Spirit, the same power that raised him from the

dead, so that we can do all that GOD wants us to do to point people to Jesus, to tell them the good news and to demonstrate that in the way we live out our lives. (It doesn't give us the power to decide our own bedtimes, it doesn't enable us all to become millionaires or to win lots of fights, or elections, or to get jobs that allow us to boss other people around, but Jesus does promise us the power to love and the power to carry out all the plans God has for us. We are given the power, but it doesn't belong to us, the power is God's and we need to use it for his glory.

2. **Power for what?** Which brings us on to the second point what is that power for? Most people use their power for their own ends – to make money, to make life easier for themselves, to get their own way. But Jesus' power is always to be used to do GOD's will and to serve others. Christians are not meant to be out for themselves, they are to be concerned to love and care for others. God's power isn't to be used selfishly but for the benefit of others. We need to be less concerned about ourselves and more interested in doing what God wants, putting him and other people before our own interests. That isn't easy but he can give us the strength to make it happen. Think for a minute of all the good that could be done in the world if we were able to harness all the electricity, gas, petrol, renewables - energy of all kinds FOR GOOD. That would be truly marvellous. But actually there is better even than that because Jesus said – you have been given even greater power than me, you have the same power (from God) that raised Jesus from dead. How much good could WE do, with the power that God gives us, by his Holy Spirit in our homes, schools, church, community, the world? God's arithmetic is sometimes a little different to ours. We think we are “the only one”, we're small and can't achieve much. But God + 1 is a majority and with his strength we can do so much – to love others, to further his plans to let people know that he loves them and wants them to love him.

Power – is not about strength and getting one over others – real power comes from God, and has to do with loving him and serving him and loving and serving our neighbours for his sake.

Pentecost was the day when the Holy Spirit of Jesus came upon his friends in the power of love and changed them from frightened, timid individuals into bold messengers of the good news of Jesus and his love. That same Spirit of Jesus can give us the power of love, not to boss people about, but to love them and share the news of Jesus – and THAT could change people's lives, could change the WORLD for good, for Jesus!

May the Lord bless you! Amen.