

Strengthened with Power; Ephesians 3:14-19

I. Power

- A. "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely" Lord Acton, historian, politician and writer (1834-1902)
- B. We can easily see the corruption of power in the confirmation hearings for Mr. Kavanaugh
 - 1. The hearings opened with senators throwing their weight around trying to delay the hearing
 - 2. The hearings progressed with other senators throwing their weight around to continue the hearing
 - 3. What should be a hearing to determine the qualifications for a person nominated to be a Supreme Court justice has turned into a political circus
 - 4. Some on social media even accused one of Mr. Kavanaugh's former law clerks of making a white supremacist sign (She is Mexican and Jewish, and her grandparents narrowly escaped the holocaust)
 - 5. I really don't know how these senators can look at themselves in the mirror and not see the travesty of what has become a very important construct of the Supreme Court nomination process — "power tends to corrupt"
- C. Further in Lord Acton's letter to Archbishop Creighton he talks about the moral code, specifically, "the inflexible integrity of the moral code"
- D. The letter that Lord Acton is writing to Archbishop Creighton is about holding those in authority (specifically the Pope) to this inflexible moral code when writing history
- E. Power corrupted the ruling religious leaders of Israel
 - 1. Mark 14:1-2 (ESV); ¹ It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him, ² for they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar from the people."
 - 2. The Mosaic Law required at least two witnesses to convict anyone of a crime (Deuteronomy 17:6, 19:15)
 - 3. Deuteronomy 17:6 (ESV); On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.
 - 4. Exodus 20:16 (ESV); "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
 - 5. Matthew 26:59 (ESV); Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death,
- F. If power corrupts, why does God want us to be strengthened with power?

II. Holy Spirit

- A. Ephesians 3:14-16 (ESV); ¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,
- B. Sometimes we get confused when we read about the Holy Spirit
- C. What does being strengthened by His Spirit actually look like?
 - 1. To confirm God's choice?
 - 2. Numbers 11:24-25 (ESV); ²⁴ So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. ²⁵ Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.
 - 3. To complete God's mission?
 - 4. Acts 2:1-4 (ESV); ¹ When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind,

- and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.
5. It happened again to Cornelius in Acts 10:44-48
 6. Hebrews 2:4 (ESV); while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.
- D. But all this is tempered by Philip's visit to Samaria
1. Acts 8:18–19 (ESV); ¹⁸ Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."
 2. None of the apostles are alive today
- E. So, again, what is Paul saying, "be strengthened with power through His Spirit"?
- III. Inner being
- A. "in you inner being"
 - B. A being in conflict at a transcendent (beyond physical, spiritual) level ¹
 - C. The two sides of human nature. The outer being, i.e. human beings in their material, transitory, and sinful aspects, and, on the other hand, the inner being, i.e. humans in their transcendent significance, striving toward God ²
 - D. Paul is not talking about an outward manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit
 1. The Spirit rushing on Samson
 2. The Spirit falling on Cornelius
 3. The Spirit healing those in Samaria through Philip
 - E. Paul is talking about the work that the Spirit does to us inwardly
 1. Acts 4:27–31 (ESV); ²⁷ for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ²⁹ And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰ while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." ³¹ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.
 2. The apostles were ready for a physical change in the nation of Israel — they were looking for a physical Kingdom of God
 3. The work of the Spirit changed their inner being and the focus of their words and actions to the spiritual Kingdom
 4. Treasures are no longer what we store up for ourselves here on this earth, but spiritual treasures
 5. Luke 12:32–34 (ESV); ³² "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
 - F. A Change of our inner being
 1. The Holy Spirit gives us the boldness to speak
 2. The Holy Spirit gives us the compassion to act
 3. The Holy Spirit changes us from who we used to be to who God wants us to be

¹ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 82.

² Ibid

4. Romans 12:2 (ESV); Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
 5. It is a continual renewal of our minds garnered through continual contact with the Holy Spirit through the Word (Jesus)
 - G. God demands a complete change from us — from physical to spiritual — and gives us the Spirit to help us make this change
 - H. We can even measure the change
 1. Paul gives us a picture of ourselves without the Spirit
 2. Galatians 5:19–21 (ESV); ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
 3. Then he gives us a new picture — with the Spirit
 4. Galatians 5:22–25 (ESV); ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.
 5. As we increase in the Spirit’s fruit we become more bold to speak, we have more compassion to act, we are renewed — we are “strengthened with power in *our* inner being”
 - I. God (and Paul) want Christ Dwelling in our hearts
- IV. Dwelling
- A. Ephesians 3:17–19 (ESV); ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
 - B. Christ dwelling in our hearts keeps us grounded in our spiritual life and not our physical life
 - C. Christ dwelling in our hearts keeps us grounded in love for God and for one another
 - D. Christ dwelling in our hearts keeps us from corruption and evil desire
 - E. Our task is to work on our “inner being” — to grow the fruit of the Spirit