

The Kingdom Turn Part 6

# KINGDOM POWER



*A ReVision Resource*

T. M. MOORE

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

Kingdom Power: The Kingdom Turn Part 6  
A *ReVision* Resource of The Fellowship of Ailbe  
Copyright 2015 T. M. Moore

*Except as indicated, Scripture taken from the New King James Version. © Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*

## Contents

Welcome to <i>ViewPoint</i>	4
1 Power Now and to Come	5
2 Not Just Talk – Power!	7
3 For Righteousness	9
4 For Peace	11
5 For Joy	13
6 Power to Witness	15
7 Exceeding, Abundant Power!	17

### Welcome to *ViewPoint*

Welcome to *Kingdom Power*, a look at the Kingdom of God not just as something to talk about, but as a source of real and transforming power. *Kingdom Power* is Part 6 in our series, *The Kingdom Turn*, and one of our *ViewPoint* series of studies in Biblical worldview.

These studies are designed for individual or group use. While you may derive much benefit from studying on your own, that benefit can be greatly enhanced by joining with a friend or a group to read, discuss, share, challenge, and pray for one another.

Take one lesson at a time, reading the Scriptures and narrative aloud, and pausing to reflect on and discuss the questions provided. Don't be in a hurry. Be willing to take more than one session on a lesson if it will allow you to delve more deeply into the subject matter.

If you're in a group, make sure you prepare for each study by reading through the lesson in advance and answering the questions in writing. Take turns leading your group. Let every member share in the privilege and responsibility of facilitating discussions. Group leaders should not feel like they have to "have all the answers." Their task is simply to lead the group through the readings and questions, and to help everyone participate.

These studies are designed as brief introductions to the subject under consideration. We hope they will enlarge your worldview, help you to become more firmly rooted in Scripture, equip you to minister to others, and stimulate you to want to learn more about the Word of God and the Biblical worldview.

We are happy to receive your suggestions for future topics and studies. Contact us at our webpage. And if you're not receiving *ViewPoint* first thing every day, then be sure to register on the website, [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org).

T. M. Moore  
Principal

## 1 Power Now and to Come

*Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17.20, 21*

### *The forefront of His ministry*

Even a cursory reading of the gospel accounts reveals that the Kingdom of God was very much at the forefront of Jesus' earthly agenda. And this makes understanding the Kingdom turn all that much more important. For Jesus, the Good News He had come to proclaim and to bring near was the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

So why does the Kingdom have so little a part in the Christian movement in our day?

The first words out of Jesus' mouth at the beginning of His public ministry were the announcement that, with His presence and preaching, the Kingdom of God, long foretold, had at last come near (Matt. 4.17). Jesus brought the Kingdom of God into human history and experience. Wherever He went, in parable after parable, sermon after sermon, Jesus focused the minds of His hearers on the fact that the reign and rule of God had come to earth in Him, and that, from His day forward, everything would change.

Following His resurrection, He spent forty days instructing His disciples in the Kingdom of God (Acts 1.3). He wanted to make sure that those to whom He was entrusting His ministry understood that the Gospel of the Kingdom, and making the Kingdom turn, was the heart of it all.

Thus it should not surprise us that the first sermon, in which the Apostle Peter heralded the onset of the last days, focused on the call to submit to Jesus as Lord and Christ (Acts 2.36), or that the early preachers and prophets of the Church emphatically declared the Gospel of the Kingdom and its presence in time and history (cf. Acts 8.12).

Make no mistake about it: The Kingdom of God is among us.

### *Evidence of the Kingdom?*

With the coming of Jesus, and especially with His ascension to heaven and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a new order of heavenly rule has been established on the earth, just as the prophets of old had foretold (cf. Dan. 2.44, 45; Is. 9.1-7).

And yet we do not have to look very far to see that much – very much – of the world does not appear to have gotten the memo.

Evidence for this new reign of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit, which is the Kingdom of God, is in short supply (Rom. 14.17). Everywhere we look, the governments of men struggle to maintain order and to realize a modicum of peace and prosperity for their people. A culture of self-indulgence, material craving, and sensual license inundates the West. Rising giants of the Eastern world strive mightily to walk a balance between traditional cultures, modern forms of governance, and the hankering for material prosperity which they have tasted and found to be most desirable. Wars and rumors of wars continue; natural disasters wipe out the lives and wellbeing of multitudes; violence, slavery, and oppression continue to threaten; and economic uncertainty is the lot of increasing numbers of people.

So if the Kingdom has come, where is the evidence of its power?

*Look to Jesus*

No, we do not now see the full evidence of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit which would indicate the presence of the Kingdom of God with power. But we do see Jesus, exalted, enthroned, advancing His rule, and building His Church (Heb. 2.8, 9). For nearly two millennia the Gospel has been increasing on earth. Men and women have forced their way into the Kingdom of God by grace through faith, putting to death their old selves and falling on the Sword of God for forgiveness and eternal life. Lives have been changed. Cultures have been transformed. Innovations and improvements in almost every area of life have come about as the result of Kingdom citizens drawing on the transforming power of Christ with new ideas and new strength.

No, the full power of the Kingdom of God is not yet visible among us. The day of its complete unveiling is yet to come.

For now, however, His Kingdom is at hand, in our midst, and we who know Him are its citizens and ambassadors (2 Cor. 5.17-21). Power is available to us which can restore the fallen world to the beauty, goodness, and truth God desires. Our calling is to understand that power and to appropriate it by faith, making and pursuing the Kingdom turn in every area of our lives.

*For reflection or discussion*

1. Meditate on 1 Thessalonians 2.12. What does it mean for you to have been called by God into His Kingdom and glory?
2. If you were challenged to produce “evidence” that the Kingdom of was real – evidence from your own life – to what would you point?
3. What about in the world at large? What evidence can we point to in the world to make our case for the reality of the Kingdom and its power?
4. Meditate on 2 Corinthians 5.17-21. As citizens and ambassadors of the Kingdom of God, what are our privileges? Our duties?
5. What is your goal for this study? What do you hope to learn?

*Next steps: What is the Kingdom of God? How do you understand it? Does your church teach much about the Kingdom of God? Talk with a few fellow believers about these questions.*

*Prayer:*

## 2 Not Just Talk – Power!

*For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.* 1 Corinthians 4.20

### *Responses to the Kingdom*

The Kingdom of God, which is unfolding on earth as it is in heaven, does not always make for good conversation. Mention the Kingdom of God among polite company, and you'll get a variety of responses.

Among those who do not know the Lord, the notion of a Kingdom of God on earth, expanding and advancing to establish its presence and reflect its heavenly character and operation (Dan. 2.44, 45; Matt. 6.10), is an idea to be ridiculed, ignored, or feared. In our increasingly secular age it is not considered “reasonable” by some to believe in a heavenly realm, populated by spiritual beings, God, and the like. The idea of anything like a “Kingdom of God” is, therefore, easily dismissed as being the naïve or misguided or dangerous thinking of religious fanatics.

Mention the Kingdom of God among believers and the responses will range from bemusement, to longing, to cautious advice about political agendas and the separation of Church and State. Most believers have heard of “the Kingdom of God,” but for most of them this is just “family talk” – a conversation set-piece that helps with our identity but doesn't have any real consequences beyond simply talking about it.

### *Just an idea?*

Looking at the overall state of affairs in the world and the Church, one might get the idea that the Kingdom of God, to whatever extent it is to be acknowledged, is primarily an intellectual construct or a promise for future fulfillment – a matter of conversation and speculation, and not much else. The subject comes up in church from time to time, and we see it mentioned in our Bibles.

But is the “Kingdom of God” anything more than an idea? A theme to talk about and with which to comfort ourselves and give us hope for the future? For if such a reality as the prophets envisioned and Jesus foretold in His many parables and teachings – if such a reality were actually in operation among us, would we not expect to see more evidence of its presence and power?

I think that's a fair conclusion. After all, the Apostle Paul insisted that the Kingdom of God must not be thought of merely as a matter of theological or philosophical conversation and debate. The rule of King Jesus, on earth as it is in heaven, does not consist in talk, but in *power*.

### *Power in the Kingdom*

There is power in the rule of King Jesus, power to transform lives, reform morals, redirect the ways of culture and society, innovate wonders of science and learning, constrain the intentions of wicked men, beautify and enrich the created order, and achieve a human environment of mercy, justice, and love among the peoples of the world. The power of the Kingdom is *spiritual* power, to be sure, but this does not make it unreal or merely an article of faith. The spiritual power of the Kingdom of God is *real* power, *transforming* power, and it is available to everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

The troubled heathen of Thessalonica understood the power of this Kingdom. They saw it at work in the lives of those who were coming to faith in Christ in their city. They saw it utterly transform their priorities and their practices, and they feared that its coming would turn upside-down everything they cherished and clung to for meaning in life (Acts 17.1-9).

But the power of the Kingdom of God is not, in the first instance, a power of human force or political

plotting; its power is spiritual and therefore eternally more potent for good than any strength of human arms or law.

For the power of the Kingdom of God flows from the throne of Jesus Christ, in the Person of His Holy Spirit, and according to the revelation of His Word. And it is flowing, even now, to the hearts of people who seek the Kingdom as their highest pursuit in every area of life (Matt. 6.33). Kingdom power flows to those who exert their strength with faith and vigor, even spiritual violence, to lay hold on that all-transforming power (Matt. 11.12), to those who wait upon God in prayer and daily obedience to realize that power for righteousness, peace, and joy, so that they might express it in love for God and for their neighbors.

The power of the Kingdom is everywhere at work. Look more closely – throughout the world and its cultures – and you will see that the power which preserves and nurtures whatever is wholesome and good – and restrains the worst evil can do – is working powerfully. Such power must be from a place and of a nature beyond this sad and sinful world.

And such power can operate within us as well, in ways exceeding abundantly beyond anything we've ever dared to ask or think (Eph. 3.20).

*For reflection or discussion*

1. How could you tell, in one who claimed to be a follower of Jesus Christ, that the Kingdom of God was not just something to talk about?
2. Many unbelievers pooh-pooh the idea that there is any such thing as the Kingdom of God. Why do you suppose this is true? Does this mean we should stop proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom to them? Why or why not?
3. “The spiritual power of the Kingdom of God is *real* power, *transforming* power, and it is available to everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus.” How do you experience this real and transforming power?
4. How can believers help one another to know more of the power of the Kingdom?
5. Meditate on Ephesians 3.20. At this point in your life, what are you *not* thinking or asking with respect to the power of God's Kingdom?

*Next steps: What are some ways you experience the power of the Kingdom of God? Talk with some Christian friends about this question.*

*Prayer:*



### 3 For Righteousness

*...for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.* Romans 14.17, 18

#### *Working power*

Power is always unto something. Power accomplishes things. Power changes things.

Explosive power destroys buildings or hillsides. Combustive power drives engines or makes steel. Nuclear power creates energy or threatens nations. Wind power drives sailing ships or turns windmills. Water power creates erosion or generates electricity. Food power replenishes bodies and releases energy for renewal. Persuasive power changes minds and hearts.

All power is unto something, some impact or result that, if we can harness the power at hand, can be channeled for good.

The same is true of the spiritual power of which the Kingdom of God consists. But if we are to engage that power, we must understand both its source and its ends, for we can only engage Kingdom power of Kingdom terms.

#### *Power for righteousness*

Paul tells us that the power of God's Spirit, which is unfolding His Kingdom on earth as it in heaven, is, in the first place, power unto righteousness. Exalted at the Father's right hand, Jesus, by His Word and Spirit, is advancing His rule on earth for the sake of increasing righteousness among the nations (cf. Is. 9.1-7).

The idea of righteousness is problematic in a relativistic day like ours. One man's righteousness might be another man's bane, according to a postmodern worldview. Which is why a postmodern approach to creating societies and cultures cannot possibly satisfy, as is now being seen. Ask anyone if the idea of "righteousness" – strictly as an idea without definition – is a good thing. Most will agree, that is, as long as they do not understand what we mean by this as a kind of mere *self*-righteousness.

Righteousness has to do, in most people's minds, with *rightness* – with ideas of goodness, consideration, honesty, fairness, and decency. Everyone will agree the world can never get enough of such commodities. Though they may not call it "righteousness", whatever power operates to bring goodness, honesty, justice, decency, and love into people's lives is regarded as a good thing.

This is why the Kingdom of God is Good News – the *Gospel* of the *Kingdom*. It is for the sake of making things right – righteousness – that the Kingdom of God has come to earth through the agency of Jesus Christ and His Spirit. Where the power of the Kingdom is flowing, righteousness is one of the end results. Jesus rules over His Kingdom with a scepter of uprightness and righteousness (Ps. 45.6). And the power of the Kingdom flows through those who have made the Kingdom turn, so that they engage all other kinds of power for Kingdom ends.

#### *The righteousness of God's Law*

Through the prophet Ezekiel God Himself spelled out both the mission of the Spirit and the particular brand of righteousness His power would bring forth in those who believed: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put

My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*.” (Ezek. 36.26, 27).

The Kingdom of God, which comes with the Spirit of God, unleashes real spiritual power for righteousness. The righteousness Jesus is advancing in His Kingdom is the righteousness of His Law.

But this has nothing to do with *self*-righteousness, or with regarding ourselves as holier or better than others. And it is not a form of “righteousness” by which we might hope to “earn” salvation or the favor of God by keeping His Law. Instead, the righteousness which God’s Law promotes issues in love for God and neighbor, a self-denying, cross-bearing, others-serving, God-glorifying power that makes all things new (Matt. 22.34-40). Contrary to what many seem to think, the Law of God is not designed to bind and burden us, but to liberate us for love (cf. Jms. 2.12). The righteousness of God’s Law comes to expression in love for God and neighbors. Where the Kingdom has come on earth as in heaven, and where people have entered that Kingdom as citizens and ambassadors, there Kingdom power will be flowing, along a course marked out by the Law of God, unto love for God and neighbors, engaging all other forms of power for the purposes of righteousness.

The Kingdom of God, as it comes to expression from within us, directs its power to righteousness, demonstrated by loving obedience to God and loving service to others. If we are not experiencing that power as much as we might like, there is a simple remedy: Submit to the Holy Spirit as He leads you to read, study, meditate in, and obey the Law of God (Ps. 1). This was the path Jesus walked, and which led Him all the way up to Calvary in the greatest expression of righteousness and love the world has ever known.

And it’s the path we who would follow Him in the Kingdom turn must walk as well (1 Jn. 2.1-6).

*For reflection or discussion*

1. What is righteousness? Why is this a good word to use in describing the character of the Kingdom?
2. We have no righteousness of our own. So, where does our righteousness come from, and how do we attain it?
3. Meditate on Romans 7.12. How would you describe the status of God’s Law in your life at this time? In your church?
4. Why do we say that the Law of God is a Law of Liberty and a Law of Love?
5. Meditate on Psalm 1 and 1 John 2.1-6). Why must the Law of God play more of a role in the lives of Kingdom citizens and ambassadors? How can we give it that role?

*Next steps: What role does the Law of God play in your church? Talk with a pastor or church leader about this question.*

*Prayer:*

## 4 For Peace

*Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4.5-7*

### *Kingdom work*

In scientific terms, power is related to work. When power is present, work is accomplished. When work needs to be done, power is applied. When the water of a dammed river rushes through turbines, electrons are agitated and electricity is generated. When electrons race against each other in a copper wire, electricity is harnessed, enabling light or machines to accomplish work. Where there's power, there's work.

In the same way, when the power of God's Spirit – which is the Kingdom of God – is welling up and flowing out through the various aspects of our souls and bodies, work gets done – the work of Christ's Kingdom, work which identifies those who perform it has having made the Kingdom turn.

That work consists in the demonstration of righteousness and love, as we have seen. But where righteousness and love abound, the work of the Kingdom will also take the form of peace. If righteousness defines the *character* of the Kingdom of God, peace defines the *condition* that character creates.

### *The condition of the Kingdom*

Peace is not merely a state of mind. Peace is a condition of wellbeing which results from work, from the flow of Kingdom power in and through Kingdom people. The attainment of peace requires diligent effort on the parts of those in whom power is working to accomplish peace (Eph. 4.3).

Power for peace is the second manifestation of the Kingdom of God, the second end toward which Kingdom power operates; and it is a power greatly longed-for by the people of our world. The peace of God's Kingdom is threefold in nature: it has an objective, subjective, and existential aspect.

### *Our threefold peace*

Objectively, the peace of God's Kingdom establishes us in a relationship of rest and love with God. We are at peace with God, Paul reminds us, when we have come under the umbrella of Jesus' saving mercy and received the gift of grace He offers in His Name (Rom. 5.1). This is the work of God's Spirit, who brings us the gift of faith as we hear and receive the Good News of forgiveness and the Kingdom of God (Gal. 4.6).

The peace we have with God overcomes all sense of fear, dread, indifference, or animosity we might have felt toward Him, and is a permanent and irrevocable condition for all who have made the Kingdom turn. The peace by which Jesus brings His rule to bear in our lives removes whatever hostility may have existed between us and God, making us no longer His enemies, but His friends and children (Rom. 5.10; Jn. 1.12).

Our *objective* peace with God thus established, we begin to know *subjectively* the experience of *shalom* which guards our hearts from fear, our minds from doubt, our consciences from guilt, and our lives from every form of temptation or trial. At peace with God we revel in the peace we know in our souls, and that peace enables us to grow in hope and glory as we continue to rest in and nourish ourselves on the grace of God.

This peace is the fruit of the Spirit of God, Who comes to us with the gift of faith, enabling us to believe and be saved (Gal. 5.22, 23). It is a peace that passes understanding, that no conditions of the world or hatred of men can destroy, and that is unlike any peace we can know by any other means (Phil. 4.6, 7; Jn. 16.33; Jn. 14.27).

Finally, the power of God's Kingdom works toward *existential* peace – peace, that is, in all the circumstances, relationships, and situations in which we find ourselves. They who are at peace with God, and know His peace within their souls, become agents of peace in a world where real peace is sorely lacking in many ways. Whatever other powers come into their hands are directed, by Kingdom power, toward the ends of righteousness and peace.

Peace is the fruit of righteousness and love, the extension to others of the reality of the Kingdom of God and the indwelling Spirit. Believers who know God's peace are called to be at peace with all people (Rom. 12.18). The work of peace-making is one of the great challenges and opportunities with which the citizens of God's Kingdom are confronted every day.

But where the power of the Kingdom is really at work, *making* peace will be simply what we do, a labor of love flowing the peace we have within our souls, and the peace we know with God as citizens and ambassadors of His Kingdom.

The power of the Kingdom is the power for peace. They who know God's peace will work for peace, as the Kingdom comes in and through them in every area of their lives.

*For reflection or discussion*

1. Meditate on Philippians 4.6, 7. In what sense, or senses, does the peace of God “surpass understanding”?
2. What does T. M. mean by the “objective” aspect of peace? How does one arrive at that condition?
3. What does he mean by the “subjective” aspect of peace? How do you experience this peace? What can threaten our possession of this peace?
4. What does T. M. mean by the “existential” aspect of peace? What does it mean for you to be a peace-maker in your own Personal Mission Field?
5. Meditate on Ephesians 4.3. Why do we need to “work hard” to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? How does this oblige our church with respect to other churches in our community?

*Next steps: What kinds of things can keep us from working for peace with others? How might we overcome these challenges so that the power of the Kingdom can flow for peace within and through us? Talk with some Christian friends about these questions.*

*Prayer:*

## 5 For Joy

*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Romans 5.1, 2*

*Not happiness - joy*

“But there is no joy in Muddville.”

So goes the penultimate line of my favorite childhood poem. Back then I could resonate with the joyless people of Muddville, whose hero, the Mighty Casey, had failed them at the crucial moment by striking out to end the big game. As a youth, my own sense of happiness and, well, joy, was closely tied to athletic success and the attention that came with it. Playing well, winning games, and being acknowledged for it were integral parts of whatever joy I knew as a youth.

It would take being deprived of athletic prowess, through injury and better competition, to show me just how little joy there was in my life.

Multitudes today deceive themselves into thinking that the happiness they feel when everything is going well in their lives is the same as real joy. It isn't of course, a fact anyone can prove by depriving himself of those things, relationships, experiences, or situations that bring pleasure and happiness to his life. Happiness is related to “hap”, circumstance, and it can never qualify as joy.

Joy is something deeper, because it is fixed in unchanging verities and conditions. Joy is the result of Kingdom power at work in those who have made the Kingdom turn.

*Real joy*

Real joy – that exulting, indomitable sense of wellbeing, security, soundness, hope, and full and abundant life – is not rooted in temporal circumstances or things. Joy is lodged in eternal realities, beginning with the sovereign plan and good pleasure of the eternal God, and is realized by entering into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ by grace through faith.

Real joy is to be found in the presence of God, with Jesus Christ, secure and loved forever and ever (Ps. 16.11). Knowing the presence of God is the unique privilege of all who have made the Kingdom turn. God never changes in His love for us, and Jesus Christ holds us fast forever, regardless of the outward circumstances of our lives. The result of experiencing this is joy.

Righteousness is the *character* of the Kingdom; peace is the *condition* the Kingdom brings with it. And joy is the *consequence* of the Kingdom, a reality nothing can shake, because the Kingdom of God is eternal and unshakable (Heb. 12.28). Joy is not the fruit of temporal conditions, but of eternal ones – conditions of perfect righteousness and unceasing peace in the presence and favor of our risen and reigning King.

*A work of God's Spirit*

Joy is not the result of favorable circumstances, but of the inward work of the Spirit of God. Joy flows with the power of the Kingdom, issuing from God's Spirit. The Spirit of God at work within us frames out a vision of the exalted Christ and His dwelling place in the unseen realm, so that true and unchanging beauty and majesty become the North Star of our being. The Spirit at work in our souls so transforms our view of the world, the affections we cherish, and the values and priorities that guide our lives, that joy is wrought throughout our souls, and comes out in our expressions and demeanor in the form of hope. The joy within

us fills us with hope in every area of our lives – hope for the glory of God and the progress of His Kingdom. They who know the joy of the Lord and His Kingdom live a tangible, visible hope, a hope that attracts the curiosity of others and creates in them a longing for something they know they need but do not presently possess (1 Pet. 3.15).

Where the Kingdom of God is advancing in a person's life, the power of God's Spirit is at work. And through that life the Spirit overflows, like a river of living water (Jn. 7.37-39), into a sphere of influence, where joy and hope and the prospect of lasting peace and righteousness assert themselves unto refreshment, restoration, and wholeness.

And that power, the power of God's Spirit that generates righteousness, peace, and joy in our souls, flows out in power to bear witness to the King Who makes it all happen.

*For reflection or discussion*

1. What are some of the differences between happiness and joy?
2. How do the character of the Kingdom (righteousness) and the condition of the Kingdom (peace) lead to the Kingdom consequence of joy? Can't we just go straight to the joy? Why or why not?
3. What are some things that seek daily to rob us of our joy? Why must we resist these? How can we resist them?
4. Joy is related to hope, as Paul indicates in Romans 5.1, 2. What would you expect the people in your Personal Mission Field to "see" in you, to demonstrate your hope and joy?
5. What are some of the primary obstacles to your being more effective as a witness for Christ?

*Next steps: When do you most experience joy? What is the source of that joy in your life? Talk with some Christian friends about these questions. Encourage one another in the joy of the Lord.*

*Prayer:*

## 6 Power to Witness

*“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Acts 1.8*

### *Transforming power*

The power of God’s Spirit, which is the power of His Kingdom, is utterly transformational. Where the Spirit of God is at work, willing and doing according to God’s good pleasure, nothing stays the same. Spiritual power works through Spirit-indwelted men and women to engage all the powers of this temporal domain in the pursuit of righteousness, peace, and joy.

Jesus commanded us to seek this power as our highest pursuit in life (Matt. 6.33). He said that we should pray that the power of the Kingdom – power for righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit – would be at work within us and throughout the earth, just as it is in heaven (Matt. 6.10). That power, Paul wrote, is able to do exceeding abundantly more, in and through us, than we have ever dared to ask or think (Eph. 3.20).

Beginning within us, in our hearts, minds, and consciences, the power of the Kingdom of God works out through all our words and deeds in forms and expressions of righteousness, peace, and joy that reflect the character and purpose of Jesus, our eternal Savior and King, empower all who have made the Kingdom turn to engage all other forms of power for the advancement of Christ’s rule on earth as it is in heaven.

This is real power, *transforming* power – power which belongs to and is expressed by every person who is seeking the Kingdom of God, everyone in whom the Spirit of power is increasingly at work.

The Kingdom of God is not just an interesting theological subject, to define, debate, or deny. It is *real power*, power to produce work and get results, power that flows by the Spirit of the living God from within our souls out through every aspect of our lives to refresh, renew, and redeem everything and everyone. We do not know the Kingdom of God unless and until we know this transforming power throughout our souls and lives.

They who belong to Jesus, all who have made the Kingdom turn, understand full well why He commanded them to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, for this is the natural citizenship and endowment of the redeemed, and in this heavenly domain they find all their meaning, purpose, power, joy, and peace.

### *The Spirit at work within us*

So it is no wonder that this same power at work within us for righteousness, peace, and joy should also issue in witness for the Lord.

We know that Christ has forgiven our sins, has sent His Spirit to dwell within us, is opening up the truth of His Word to our understanding, and is at work within us to will and do according to His good pleasure (Phil. 2.12, 13). It fills us with joy and hope to know the Lord in this way, and it transforms our outlook on life – our worldview – so that we begin to long earnestly for others to know the liberation into light and life that we have come to know in Christ.

The power of the Kingdom which is transforming us from within will make us alert to and ready for opportunities to talk with others about this glorious Good News (1 Pet. 3.15).

So, given an opportunity to direct the attention of others to Jesus, the citizens of His Kingdom will do so – eagerly, joyfully, and with full conviction. The citizens of the Kingdom of God do not need a program,

course, or schedule to get them talking about their Savior and King. The power of the Kingdom within them wells up and overflows to touch the lives of others out of sheer love for God and neighbor (Jn. 7.37-39).

In so doing they are neither pushy nor smug. Rather, grace guides their listening and their speaking as they tell the old, old story of righteousness, peace, and joy which only Jesus can bring (Col. 4.6).

*Sent like Jesus*

The Lord God has sent each of us into the world after the same manner that He sent Jesus – to live and proclaim the reality of the Kingdom and to show its power to everyone through our lives. Where the transforming power of God’s Spirit is working to unfold the rule of Jesus in the life of any man or woman, that power will issue in words of testimony and witness to all who ask a reason for the hope that is within us.

The Spirit’s power for witness builds up within us like rushing water behind the spigots of our mouths. All we need to do in order to let that power flow is open our mouths and begin to speak about Jesus and what He means to us.

The Kingdom power of God’s Spirit will take it from there.

*For reflection or discussion*

1. What is the Good News of the Kingdom of God? That is, what would you tell an unbeliever to entice him or her to consider the Kingdom of Jesus Christ?
2. Jesus said the Spirit’s power would enable us to “be” His witnesses. Is there a difference between “being” a witness and “doing” witnessing? How do these two ideas relate to one another?
3. How do you prepare yourself each day for opportunities to “be” a witness for Jesus Christ?
4. Meditate on John 20.21. What are the implications of this for you?
5. Meditate on John 7.37-39. How should we expect the character, condition, and consequence of the Kingdom to affect our lives with others?

*Next steps: Who are the people in your life who need to hear the Good News of the Kingdom of God? Begin praying daily that God would give you opportunities to “open the spigot” and let the Spirit’s power for witness flow through you. Enlist a believing friend to pray for you in this matter.*

*Prayer:*



## 7 Exceeding, Abundant Power!

*Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.* Ephesians 3.20, 21

### *Ever-advancing power*

If you've been paying attention to this series on the Kingdom power of God you will have noted a distinctive emphasis on the ways that Kingdom comes to light within, through, and among us.

We have been insisting that the rule of King Jesus is advancing on earth, and has been advancing ever since He came among us, even though it may not appear that such could possibly be the case (Dan. 2.44, 45; Is. 9.6, 7).

Given the woes and sorrows of this present age, how can we think that Jesus is advancing His holy rule?

But there is yet much of goodness, truth, joy, generosity, beauty, decency, honesty, justice, and love in this weary world, none of which would be possible – given the inveterate sinfulness of men – apart from an eternal presence and power at work within us. As the Apostle John explained, the Light of Christ has dawned, and the darkness of sin and unbelief is receding, for it cannot overcome the Kingdom of God (1 Jn. 2.8).

For those of us who have come to know Jesus Christ as Savior and King, our desire must be to seek more of this Kingdom's presence and ever-advancing power in our own lives, and through us, to the world where we have presence and influence.

### *More power*

We can never plumb the depths of the wells of power that Jesus is ready to pour out through us. Paul says there is more power of God's Spirit to make us righteous, fill us with peace and joy, and use us as witnesses for Jesus Christ than we could ever ask or think.

Our problem is not that such power isn't really available; it is. Our problem is that we don't really *think* that's so, and so we do not *ask* for such power to be at work within us, engaging and directing all our powers in every moment toward the ends of the Kingdom of God. Whether we hesitate because of doubt, fear, unbelief, or simple complacency, we hesitate to seek this transforming power in ways that could really change our lives.

More power is available to us, power to transform us into the image of Jesus Christ and send us into the world each day as His ambassadors and witnesses. Don't think so? Can't imagine it? Then stop believing your puny, timid brain, and let the mind of Christ direct your paths.

Jesus assured us that God is willing to give His Spirit and Kingdom to all who ask for it – who seek it diligently through earnest, persistent, impassioned pleading with God in prayer and waiting on Him in obedience (Lk. 11.1-13). But as long as we do not really *believe* in the presence of God's Kingdom or the ability of His Spirit to transform and use us as agents of grace, we will not *seek* the Kingdom as we should, will not *experience* it as we might, and will not *express* it as we could – and as our Lord *expects* we should.

### *Our fault*

If our sad world lacks evidence of the Good News Kingdom of God, it is not the fault of the world; nor is it the fault of the Savior. The Kingdom is real, and its power is increasing. The fault for our world's sad state

lies elsewhere; it lies with us.

Kingdom power, exceeding and abundant beyond everything we've ever dared to ask or think, is available through those who have made the Kingdom turn to engage and direct all human powers of whatever kinds toward unprecedented ends of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit.

Thus far, in this generation of believers, we have not dared to believe it could be so, and we have not sought the Lord earnestly and persistently, so that we might know such power, experience such power, and show such power of transforming love to the world around us. We see the stormy seas of our secular age raging and raving all about us, and we choose to remain safe and comfortable within the boat of our past experience. And we turn a deaf ear to the Savior Who, walking above the *Sturm und Drang* of this world, calls us to get out of the boat and walk.

There is power, far more abundant power, available to everyone who believes in Jesus and longs to see His Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Do you believe it? Can you imagine, and do you dare to dream of what such power might look like, flowing in and through your life? And if you can think it, do you dare obey the Lord Jesus and *seek* that power in prayer? Do you take up the heretofore unimaginable challenge of leaving your comfort zone to walk on the waves?

The Kingdom of God is a real presence, and Kingdom power is really at work, here and now; it is not a matter of mere words, but of real power, power which can be ours, if only we will seek it as we have been commanded.

*For reflection or discussion*

1. Meditate on Philippians 2.13 and Ephesians 3.20. How should these two verses affect your approach to seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness?
2. Do you agree with T. M. when he says that the sad plight of our world today is in many respects the fault of the Church? Why or why not? Is this true in your community?
3. What are some areas of your own life where you would like to see more of the power of the Kingdom at work?
4. What's the most important lesson you've learned from this study?
5. How are you planning to put that lesson to work in your life?

*Next steps: On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is the highest rating, how would you assess your own practice of seeking the Kingdom and power of God at this time? What's one thing you could do to begin knowing more of that power in your life? Share your thoughts about this with a prayer partner.*

*Prayer:*



## The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at [www.ailbe.org](http://www.ailbe.org) to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.