

It seems to be in Scripture that the Holy Spirit is the primary agent of God's power given to us and working through us

The power that this verse is talking about seems to be the Holy Spirit (verse 20)

Romans 1:4 (about Jesus)

...and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead **by the power of the Holy Spirit**. He is Jesus Christ our Lord.

This same power (imagine that) is available to the Christian

This is not only a NT reality—**God's Spirit** has always been the **source of power** for God's people

- **But as for me, I am filled with power—with the Spirit of the Lord**. I am filled with justice and strength to boldly declare Israel's sin and rebellion. (Micah 3:8)
- **This is what the Lord says to Zerubbabel: It is not by force or by strength [i.e. human strength], but by My Spirit says the Lord of Heaven's Armies. Nothing, not even a mighty mountain, will stand in Zerubbabel's way...** (Zechariah 4:6-7<sup>a</sup>)

But in the NT there is a more full availability to the power of the Spirit

What we must realize is that the fruitful Christian life cannot be lived in our own strength (good news)

Even Jesus Incarnate was dependant upon the power of the Holy Spirit (Cf. Baptized)

- **Then Jesus returned to Galilee, filled with the Holy Spirit's power**. Reports about Him spread quickly through the whole region. (Luke 4:14)
- **Amazed, the people exclaimed, "What authority and power this man's words possess! Even evil spirits obey him, and they flee at his command!"** (Luke 4:36)

The power of God is available to every Christian for every instance

- To resist temptation
- To resist the devil
- To do the right thing
- To overcome sinful dependencies and addictions
- To forgive when it is hard
- To love when we don't want to
- To pray when we don't know how to
- To witness in the face of opposition

For most of us, the daily struggle is sin. It helps us to realize that:

### The Holy Spirit has the power to free us from the power of sin

- Romans 8:2  
And because you belong to Him, **the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.**
- 1 Corinthians 10:13  
The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will **show you a way out** so that you can endure.
- See Galatians 5:16-26
- Romans 8:13  
...through the **power** of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature

### The Holy Spirit has the power to free us from the power of doubt and despair

- Romans 15:13  
I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope **through the power of the Holy Spirit.**

This is wonderful news for most of us who would say:

- I sin more than I want to—I struggle with doubt and despair
- I want to live differently, behave differently—I want joy and peace and confident hope

But... I am very aware of my weakness and inability

- I have a hard time resisting sin
- I can't manufacture peace and joy
- I can't seem to have confident hope sometimes
- Though I know I should—I am weak

Good news

- 2 Corinthians 12:8-10  
<sup>8</sup> Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away.  
<sup>9</sup> Each time he said, "**My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.**" So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, **so that the power of Christ can work through me.**  
<sup>10</sup> That's why **I take pleasure in my weaknesses**, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

### His power works best in our weakness

There is a hint for us—we need to realize our own weaknesses

- It is not that we need to make ourselves weak
- It is that we are fooling ourselves if we think we aren't—that we can do this thing ourselves
- We need a rescuer—always!
  - So, we must recognize we are weak and depend upon God for help

We live in a culture of power—it tells us to be strong and independent

- The Gospel tells us that we are weak and dependent
- We were created as contingent creatures—Sin has only made us more needy

So, how do I lay hold of the power? I realize I am weak—now what?

Luke 11:9-13

- <sup>9</sup> And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.
- <sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.
- <sup>11</sup> You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead?
- <sup>12</sup> Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not!
- <sup>13</sup> So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.**

**The dictate of Christian life is that we let God work in us and through us by His power**

Philippians 2:13

For **God is working in you**, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

2 Corinthians 6:6-7

We prove ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, **by the Holy Spirit within us**, and by our sincere love. We faithfully preach the truth. **God's power is working in us.**

Ephesians 3:20-21

- <sup>20</sup> Now all glory to God, who is able, **through his mighty power at work within us**, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.
- <sup>21</sup> Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

**See Ephesians 5:10-21**

- The present participle = be being filled
- The results
  - Wise living
  - God glorifying thoughts and worshipful hearts
  - Grateful living
  - Humility toward one another

Look at how it worked out in the early church as they were continually filled with the Holy Spirit

Acts 4:31-34 (Context of opposition to mission)

- <sup>31</sup> After this **prayer**, the meeting place shook, and they were all **filled with the Holy Spirit**. Then **they preached the word of God with boldness**.
- <sup>32</sup> All the believers were **united in heart and mind**. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so **they shared everything** they had.
- <sup>33</sup> The apostles **testified powerfully** to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and **God's great blessing** was upon them all.
- <sup>34</sup> There were **no needy people among them**, because those who owned land or houses would sell them
- <sup>35</sup> and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

The results:

- Bold and powerful witnessing of the risen Christ
- Unity among believers
- Generosity with resources
- Care for the needy among them
  - I.e. The church looked like the church is supposed to look like!

Again, the difference was that they were filled with God's power (the Holy Spirit) in response to need induced prayer!

- "God we need you!"

"If there were only one prayer I might pray before I died, it should be this: "Lord, send thy church men [and women] filled with the Holy Ghost and with fire." –Charles Spurgeon

That is the desperate need—but are we willing?

"After a person is convinced that he or she can be filled with the Spirit **they must desire to be**. To the interested inquirer I ask these questions: Are you sure that you want to be possessed by a Spirit Who, while He is pure and gentle and wise and loving, will yet insist upon being Lord of your life? Are you sure you want your personality to be taken over by One Who will require obedience to the written Word? Who will not tolerate any of the self-sins in your life: self-love, self-indulgence? Who will not permit you to strut or boast or show off? Who will take the direction of your life away from you and will preserve the sovereign right to test you and discipline you? Who will strip away from you many loved objects which secretly harm your soul?

Unless you can answer an eager "Yes" to these questions **you do not want to be filled**. You may want the thrill or the victory or the power, but you do not really want to be filled with the Spirit...

Before there can be fullness there must be emptiness. Before God can fill us with Himself we must first be emptied of ourselves." –A. W. Tozer<sup>1</sup>

Prayer—Ask, seek, knock!

---

<sup>1</sup> *Keys to the Deeper Life*, 51, 52, 54.