

When I Feel Overwhelmed and Powerless

On Sunday we began a new sermon series called “Managing Our Moods” in which we’ll explore 6 powerful negative emotions. We started with feelings of being overwhelmed and powerless.

1. Warm-up Question: What was your favorite Super Bowl moment – on the field, during halftime, or in a commercial?
2. Living through a pandemic, and all its side effects, has left many of us feeling overwhelmed and powerless.
 - a. How has the pandemic affected your work life?
 - b. How has the pandemic affected your moods and emotions?
 - c. How has the pandemic affected your relationships with others?
 - d. Tell us about something you’re facing right now – whether it’s COVID-related or not – that tempts you to feel overwhelmed and powerless.
3. During the Great Depression, a man named Ira Yates owned a sprawling sheep ranch in West Texas. Income from the ranch wasn’t enough to meet the mortgage and he faced foreclosure, until a seismographic crew from an oil company told Yates he might have oil on his property. Exploratory drilling discovered one of the largest oil reserves ever. From the first day he bought his ranch, Yates was a billionaire, but didn’t know it and lived in poverty for years. What was true of Yates, Jeff said, is also true of us. Buried inside each of us there is an immense reservoir of power just waiting to be tapped into. Jesus describes the source of that power. Read John 16:7.
 - a. What do you imagine it was like to live in the presence of Jesus? How do you think his disciples felt when he told them it would be better that he go away?
 - b. The Greek term *parakletos* means helper, advocate, or comforter. Jesus used this term to refer to the Holy Spirit. He explained that after his departure, God would give each of his followers the gift of the Holy Spirit – the invisible presence of God dwelling inside each of us. Jeff described Jesus as “Power Concentrated” and the Holy Spirit as “Power Distributed.” What do you think he meant?
 - c. Read John 14:16-17. Why is it better to have the Holy Spirit than to have Jesus?
 - d. Take a look at the photo on p. 3 of the Omega Nebula, a huge star producing region in the middle of the Milky Way Galaxy. It took the power of God to create and sustain the Omega Nebula. According to Jesus, that same power now lies within you. Do you believe that? How do you feel about that?
 - e. Tell us about a time in your life (or in somebody else’s) when you realized that we have a lot more power inside of us than we realize.

4. It does no good to have a huge “oil reserve” of the power of the Holy Spirit within us if we allow it to lay dormant. The key is to tap into it. Although long, complex books have been written about how to tap into the power of the Spirit, Jeff suggested it can be as simple as embracing Philippians 4:13 as our constant life affirmation. Philippians 4:13 says, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Jeff said, “Several times every day, I find myself thinking, ‘I can’t do this; it’s too much,’ but then I stop myself and say aloud, ‘I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.’ And somehow – I can’t explain it – every time I say that simple affirmation it’s like a power wells up within me from out of nowhere and I can do it.” Have you experimented with the ‘Philippians 4:13 Affirmation’ this week? What impact is it having on you?
5. The ‘Philippians 4:13 Affirmation’ should not be confused with something called ‘Name-it and Claim-it Theology,’ which espouses the idea that you can name whatever you want to happen, claim it in the name of Jesus, and magically you’ll get what you wish. We know that’s not what Philippians 4:13 means because of what Paul says in the verse right before. Read Philippians 4:12.
 - a. Paul had many ups and downs in his life, including a chronic medical condition that dogged him for much of his life. When verse 12 is taken together with verse 13, what does Paul mean when he says, “I can do anything through Christ who strengthens me?” Did he mean he had the power to make all his problems go away? If not, what did he mean?
 - b. Name a problem you would like to go away. What might it look like for you to triumph through the problem, rather than escape it?
 - c. Why doesn’t God promise to take all our problems away?
6. Writing for *Psychology Today*, Therapist Sandra Brown tells how her Mom married a “pathological man.” Despite a troubled marriage, her Mom had a big house, diamonds, and a great job. A bitter divorce cost her everything, including her life’s savings, forcing her to work menial jobs well past retirement age. Instead of becoming bitter, her Mom embraced a simple form of life. People would ask her, “How did you do it? How did you shed the despair and bitterness of what he did to you and grow into who you are – this bright, shining, joyful person?” Sandra says her Mom’s “joy came from deeply held spiritual beliefs [and] making peace with where you are, [and recognizing that] you need nothing more than your truth and the love of a good God to bring peace [that cannot be] rocked by anything.”
 - a. Have you ever known someone like Sandra’s Mom? What would it take for you to get there?
 - b. Recall the answer you gave in response to Question 2.d. about something that tempts you to feel overwhelmed and powerless. As an experiment in faith, will you commit that, for the next month, you will bombard your problem with repeated affirmations of Philippians 4:13 and see what happens?

Omega Nebula

