

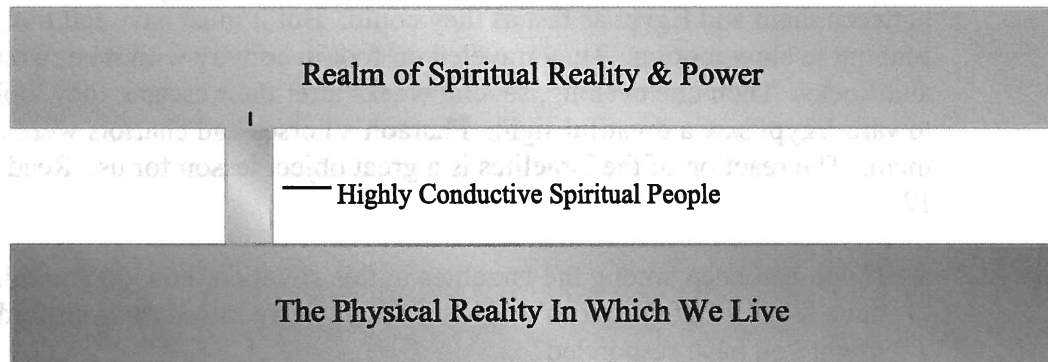
Power Shortage

On Sunday, we continued our sermon series on the Holy Spirit by exploring what it means to live in “the power of the Spirit.”

1. Warm up question: Jeff told about one of his worst recurring nightmares where he’s being chased, but can only run in slow motion. What’s your worst recurring nightmare?
2. We often feel like someone running in slow motion, doomed to be overtaken by our problems. When you read the Bible, do you ever find yourself wondering about the sharp contrast between the power our ancestors in the faith experienced and the chronic weakness that so often characterizes our lives today? How does that make you feel? What questions does it raise for you?
3. After escaping slavery in Egypt, the Israelites did their best to put as much distance between them and Egypt as fast as they could. But it must have felt like they were running in slow motion. They traveled on foot in convoy with men, women, children, and flocks. Then one evening, several weeks after their escape, they look back toward Egypt saw a dreadful sight. Pharaoh’s horses and chariots were coming for them. The reaction of the Israelites is a great object lesson for us. Read Exodus 14:5-12.
 - a. If you had been among the Israelites in this situation, how do you think you would have felt? What questions would this threat have raised for your faith? How might you have responded?
 - b. The Israelite reaction is one of pure despair – a complete loss of hope. When in your life have you most felt like that?
 - c. Where in your life right now are you tempted to feel despair?
4. Moses was in the same situation as his fellow Israelites, but he reacted very differently. Read Exodus 14:13-22.
 - a. What do you glean from verse 14? What does it say to you?
 - b. How do you feel about verses 17-18? Are you comfortable with them? What do you make of them?
 - c. The miracle of the parting of the sea reminds us that there is a spiritual dimension to every physical circumstance, with huge potential impact. Miracles remind us that we are not in a closed system. In our own lives, many of us have had “Red Sea experiences” – times when God seemed to take a situation of despair and turn it into a great victory in a way that amazed us. Jeff shared the story of a young girl miraculously healed of a brain tumor by the power of prayer, and the story of

how God used Steph Branson's prayers to miraculously deliver her client out of an oppressive rehab center to a much better place. When in your life have you experienced the hand of God in a situation that seemed to defy natural explanation?

5. When we hear stories of God's great power at work among us, it raises a question: Where does that kind of power come from, and how can we access it? Jesus gives us the answer in Acts 1:8, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." Read also: I Samuel 16:13, and Zechariah 4:6. How would you put Zechariah 4:6 in your own words?
6. The foregoing verses seem to teach that people who welcome the Holy Spirit in their lives, and consistently cultivate that Spirit through personal spiritual practices, somehow become highly conductive channels through which spiritual power can flow into circumstances in our earthly realm. Jeff used the following diagram to illustrate this concept.



- a. How does this way of seeing things sit with you? Do you buy the notion that some people are "highly conductive" of spiritual power?
- b. In your view, how does a person become "highly conductive" of spiritual power? What's the difference between someone who is and someone who isn't?
7. Jeff suggested two basic things we can do to live in "the power of the Spirit."
- No. 1 – Develop your conductivity by engaging in consistent spiritual practices.
- No. 2 – Practice seeing situations like Moses did – through the lens of "possibility thinking."
- a. Do you feel you're current rhythm of spiritual practices is sufficient to make you a "highly conductive" conduit of the power of the Spirit? What, if anything, would you like to change to enhance your conductivity? Is it worth the effort?
- b. Go back to the situation you mentioned in Question 3.c. – a situation in your life right now where you're tempted to feel to despair. Describe what it might look like to see that situation through the lens of "possibility thinking"?