

Sermon Series: “When Heaven Invades Earth”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN —5/6/07

Title: “All Talk or All Power?”

Text: 1 Corinthians 4: 20

Intro.: Ills.: All talk and no action

Theme: We can stand up as God’s Church in Christ’s name and fearlessly and courageously live out his message of life and truth when we understand that we have “all his power in heaven and on earth” backing us up.

Knowing what power Jesus has promised to us

- He backs us up with all his authority and power
 1. *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me; therefore, go . . .” Matt 28: 18-19*
 2. You and I represent **THE KING** in our world and to our world
- He backs us up with his powerful word
 1. **Print and read Romans 10: 14-17**
 2. **Ills.: Know your tools so you can carry out your trade (plumber and torch/pipes)**
- He promises his powerful, indwelling Spirit
 1. *You won't succeed by might or by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Armies. Zech 4: 6*
 2. It is not intelligence/cleverness or good looks/financial prowess but simply by Spirit we move the kingdom ahead
 3. **Print and read 1 Cor. 2: 1-5**
- He promises you that nothing will be able to withstand you
 1. *He who vindicates Me is near who will contend with Me? Let us stand up to each other; who has a case against Me? Let him draw near to Me. Isaiah 50:8*
 2. **Ills.: Lightly govern with strength**

Avoiding the trap of being an ‘all talk and no show’ believer

- The *politically correct* Christians
 1. Often, we smother our witness and temper our walk so that we won’t stand out and we will fit in
 2. *“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” Matt 4: 14-16*
- The *timid/fearful* Christian
 1. We fear the heat we will take and the loss we will endure, if we stand up for Christ in home, work, extended family
 2. *The person who has God's approval will live by faith. But if he turns back, I will not be pleased with him.” We don't belong with those who turn back and are destroyed. Instead, we belong with those who have faith and are saved. Hebrews 10:38-39*
- The *“too busy to be bothered”* Christian
 1. **Ills.: Coach Warton and pep talk – if you are too busy to be focused on business at hand leave the team**
 2. *But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” Luke 9:62*

Living out the powerful Kingdom of God in your life

- Because God’s promise and your salvation cannot be touched
 2. *You have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Christ is your life. When he appears, then you, too, will appear with him in glory. Col. 3:3-4*
- Because God is opening doors for us to advance his kingdom
 1. *I know what you have done. See, I have opened a door in front of you that no one can shut. You only have a little strength, but you have paid attention to my word and have not denied my name. Rev. 3:8*
 2. *“It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. “So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to*

defend yourselves; for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute. Luke 21:13-15

- Because God wants to demonstrate his power through your faithful action to step out and be counted for him
 1. **Ills.: Moses, the Levites, and gold calf** ("*If you're on the Lord's side, come over here to me!*" **Exodus 32:26**)
 2. Most times, God may not clue us in the how or why of what he is doing so it is faith not a sight thing on our part
 3. Sometimes, God may put us between a rock & a hard place so that our choice must depend on his resource
 - a. "*Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. Luke 12:32*
 4. Always, God will lead us to His gracious plan to advance the Kingdom for His glory
 - a. "*Then all men will fear, And they will declare the work of God, And will consider what He has done. The righteous man will be glad in the Lord and will take refuge in Him; and all the upright in heart will glory. Ps 64:9-10*

All talk and no action

In the later months of 1862, during the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln was angered by General George B. McClellan's inactivity despite superiority in numbers over the Confederate forces. After countless correspondences with Lincoln in which McClellan promised to take a more definitive and aggressive approach to his battle strategy, nothing ever happened. It was all talk and no action. In the end, he wrote McClellan a letter consisting of only a single sentence: "*If you don't want to use the army, I should like to borrow it for a while. Yours respectfully, A. Lincoln.*" **Clifton Fadimon, The Little, Brown Book of Anecdotes (Little Brown & Co., 1985), p. 359; submitted by J. R. Love, Rushton, Louisiana**

Lightly Governed with Strength

The sentence still jumps out at me from the middle of an editorial in *The Wall Street Journal*. It's been half a decade since I read it, but it was one of those electric expressions that you can't forget: "People want to be lightly governed," the writer said, "by strong governments." That's what you've wanted since you were a small child. You wanted your dad to be big and strong and able to do anything you could think of—except that, when he dealt with you, it had to be with gentleness and tenderness. You wanted a policeman on the corner tough enough to handle any neighborhood bully, but who would also hoist you to his shoulders and help you find your parents when you got lost in the crowd. Lots of muscle; lots of restraint. There's an innate yearning in almost all of us for that rare combination. When evil people rise up, we want a government with the clout to back them down. Yet we never want that clout turned on us. In the final analysis, people want to be lightly governed by strong governments because that's how God governs. The omnipotent ruler of the universe is also the one who invites us tenderly: "Come unto me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." **Joel Belz, "Tender Toughness," © World magazine (7-22-06), p. 3; excerpted by permission**

1 Cor. 4: 20

For the Kingdom of God is not just fancy talk; it is living by God's power. [NLT]

Romans 10: 14-17

¹⁴But how can people call on him if they have not believed in him? How can they believe in him if they have not heard his message? How can they hear if no one tells the Good News? ¹⁵How can people tell the Good News if no one sends them? As Scripture says, "How beautiful are the feet of the messengers who announce the Good News." ¹⁶But not everyone has believed the Good News. Isaiah asks, "Lord, who has believed our message?" ¹⁷So faith comes from hearing the message, and the message that is heard is what Christ spoke.

1 Cor. 2:1-5

And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.