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The Power of God's Word

PSALM 119:9-16

Introduction

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1. Many of you are familiar with a song which bears the simple title "*Awesome God.*"

Our God is an awesome God
He reigns from heaven above,
With wisdom, power, and love
Our God is an awesome God
2. The song which was written and recorded in 1988 by Rich Mullins draws its inspiration from a biblical expression found in various passages of God's Word.
 - a. In Deuteronomy 7:21, Moses encouraged the Israelites prior to their entrance into the promised land, saying, "the Lord your God is in your midst, a great and awesome God."
 - b. Nehemiah, the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, after learning about the distress of his fellow Israelites back in Jerusalem, began one of his prayers with the words, "I beseech You, O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God" (Nehemiah 1:5).
 - c. Daniel, in Daniel 9:4, began his prayer, requesting of God that He allow the captives in Babylon to return home, with the words, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God . . ."
3. As the song declares, our God is not only known for his wisdom and love, but also for His power.
4. In his letter to the Christians in Rome, the apostle Paul, writes of "the wrath of God" which is being revealed against those "who suppress the truth in

unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18).

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5. In verse 20, he writes, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20, NASB95).
6. One of God's invisible attributes which Paul said we clearly see in the world around is His "eternal power."
7. Consider just three things which reveal this power: wind, water and light.
 - a. Here in our own community, on October 26, 2019, we saw what straight line winds can do. We have also seen the effects of tornadoes and hurricanes on our neighbors to the north and south of us.
 - b. This past week our group in El Salvador stood at the Pacific Ocean and witnessed the tremendous power of the waves as they crashed ashore.
 - e. The Sun which warms the soil and causes plants to grow can also scorch another part of our planet. Perhaps some of you have taken a magnifying glass and focused its rays so as to ignite a piece of paper or a leaf.
8. Today, as we look forward to this week's VBS, I would like for you to consider the power of God's Word,
 - a. The word which He speaks
 - b. His written word which we hold in our hands and seek to communicate to our friends and neighbors.

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I. The Word Which God Speaks

A. CREATIVE POWER

1. From Genesis 1:1, we learn that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," but how did this take place.
2. The psalmist tells us in Psalm 33:6, "By the word of the Lord the heavens

were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host." (Psalm 33:6, NASB95).

3. In Hebrews 11, the great chapter on God's faithful, the writer declares, "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible." (Hebrews 11:3, NASB95).
4. Nine times in the first chapter of Genesis we find the statement "Then God said" (vv. 3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26,29) followed by what He calls into existence.
5. Six times in this first chapter we encounter the summary statement, "and it was so" (vv. 7,9,11,15,24,30), indicating that what God called into being came into existence.
6. As Elihu, a young man who came to comfort Job in his suffering, pointed out, this creative power of God is beyond our ability to comprehend (cf. Job 37:5).

"God thunders with His voice wondrously, doing great things which we cannot comprehend." (Job 37:5, NASB95)

7. In God's challenge to Job concerning his competence to judge God's control of the world, we find God asking him questions such as . . .
 - a. "Where were you when . . . I placed boundaries on it [the sea] and set a bolt and doors, and I said, 'Thus far you shall come, but no farther; and here your proud waves stop?' (Job 38:4a, 10-11, NASB95).
 - b. "Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, and caused the dawn to know its place, that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it?" (Job 38:12-13, NASB95).
 - c. "Or do you have an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like His?" (Job 40:9, NASB95)
8. None of us have such power, that we can simply speak and these things happen.

4a**B. SUSTAINING POWER**

1. The word which God speaks also has power to sustain us.
2. One example of such power involves the Israelites, who, after leaving Mt. Sinai camped in a place known as the wilderness of Paran.
3. They complained over the fact that all they had to eat was manna, they wanted meat (Numbers 11:4-6).
4. God promised to give them meat to eat, enough meat to feed them for a month (Numbers 11:18-20).
5. Even though Moses had seen God's miracles in Egypt, not to mention the parting of the Red Sea, he questioned how this was possible.

“But Moses said, “Here I am among six hundred thousand men on foot, and you say, ‘I will give them meat to eat for a whole month!’ Would they have enough if flocks and herds were slaughtered for them? Would they have enough if all the fish in the sea were caught for them?”” (Numbers 11:21–22, NIV84)

6. I love what God said to Moses, “Is the Lord's power limited (lit. ‘hand short’)? Now you shall see whether My word will come true for you or not” (Numbers 11:23, NASB95).
7. What did God do? He caused a wind to blow quail in from the sea, so many quail that the Israelites spent two days and a night gathering them.

4b**C. PROTECTING POWER**

1. In chapter four of Mark's gospel, we find another aspect of God's power which issues forth when He speaks — the power to protect His people.
2. We encounter an example of such power in the days of our Lord when He was crossing the Sea of Galilee in a boat with His disciples.
3. He had just finished teaching a large number of people when He told His disciples, “Let us go over to the other side” (Mark 4:35).
4. They got into the boat and started across — other boats were with Him.

5. At some point, according to Mark, “a fierce gale of wind” arose creating such big waves that the boat was beginning to fill up with water.
 6. The disciples woke up our Lord as He was asleep in the back of the boat. They asked Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” (Mark 4:38).
 7. In his account, Mark says that Jesus “got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm” (Mark 4:39).
- ❑ This is the power of God’s Word over His creation on our behalf, power to provide and protect. Truly, the God you and I serve is an awesome God!

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D. RESURRECTION POWER

1. In chapter five of his gospel, Mark tells us of a synagogue official named Jairus who came up to Jesus one day, fell at His feet and pleaded with Jesus, “My little daughter is at the point of death; please come and lay Your hands on her, so that she will get well and live” (Mark 5:23, NASB95).
 - a. On His way to Jairus’ home, Jesus was delayed by another person, a woman, who also needed to be healed that day.
 - b. While Jesus was speaking with her, some people came to tell Jairus, “Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?” (Mark 5:35).
 - c. Jesus overheard what they were saying and said to Jairus, “Do not be afraid any longer, only believe” (Mark 5:36, NASB95).
 - d. When they arrived at his house, Jesus took only Peter, James and John along with Jairus and his wife into the room where the little girl was lying.
 - e. He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha kum!” which means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!” (Mark 5:41, NASB95).
 - f. Immediately, their twelve year old daughter got up and began to walk.
2. Perhaps the one example we are most familiar with is the one involving a close friend of Jesus named Lazarus.

- a. Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary, lived in the little town of Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem.
 - b. One time when Lazarus was sick the sisters sent word to inform Jesus.
 - c. Jesus purposely delayed going to them so that by the time He and the disciples arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had been dead for four days and was already in the tomb.
 - d. When Jesus came to the cave where Lazarus lay, he instructed some men to remove the stone.
 - e. In chapter 11 of his gospel, verse 43, the apostle John tells us that Jesus “cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth.””
 - f. Suddenly, Lazarus stepped out of the tomb, still bound in his grave clothes.
3. The word of our Lord holds power even over death itself.
 4. This should not amaze us because it was Jesus Himself who said “an hour is coming, when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28-29, ESV).

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II. The Word of the Lord Which We Teach and Preach

A. IS GOD'S POWER AGAINST THE GATES OF HADES

1. On one occasion, prior to His death, when Jesus was with His disciples in Caesarea Philippi, Jesus promised to build His church and stated that “the gates of Hades will not overpower it” (Matthew 16:18).
2. Gates are mean to restrain or to prevent entrance.
3. According to the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:25-26, it is the “knowledge of the truth” which allows people to “come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”
4. With Peter and the apostles preaching of the word on Pentecost, the church

gained 3,000 souls (Acts 2:41).

5. From there it took off:

- a. Following of the appointment of the seven men to meet the needs of the Hellenistic widows, we read “The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:7, NASB95)
- b. In Acts 12, after Peter’s escape from prison and the death of Herod Agrippa I, we read, “But the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied.” (Acts 12:24, NASB95)
- c. In Acts 13, after the preaching of Paul in Pisidian Antioch, Luke tells us that “the word of the Lord was being spread through the whole region.” (Acts 13:49, NASB95)
- d. In Acts 19, where Paul was teaching in Ephesus, Luke writes, “So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.” (Acts 19:20, NASB95)

6. Why is this true? It is as Isaiah the prophet wrote long ago, “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.” (Isaiah 40:8, NASB95)

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B. CALLS US AS CHRISTIANS

1. To treasure God’s word in our hearts, so that we do not sin against Him (Psalm 119:11).
2. To delight in His statutes, so that we do not forget His word (Psalm 119:16).
3. That God’s Word may truly be a lamp to our feet and a light for our path (Psalm 119:105).
4. To imitate Christ in all that we think, say or do (1 Corinthians 11:1).

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C. ENCOURAGES US TO PETITION OUR FATHER FOR WHAT WE NEED

1. "Revive me according to Your word" (Psalm 119:25).
2. "Strengthen me according to Your word" (Psalm 119:28).
3. "Be gracious to me according to Your word" (Psalm 119:58).
4. "Sustain me according to Your word" (Psalm 119:116).
5. "Give me understanding according to Your word" (Psalm 119:169).
6. "Deliver me according to Your word" (Psalm 119:170).

Conclusion

1. There is a little song which many of us learned in Bible school:

Jesus loves me this I know

For the Bible tells me so.

2. Where does the Bible teach us this? There are many places, but the one that is perhaps most familiar to us is Jesus' statement to Nicodemus which John records for us in John 3:16-17.

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"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (John 3:16-17, NKJV)

3. It is vital that each of us put away the sin in our lives and "humbly receive the implanted word, which is able to save [our souls]" (James 2:21, HCSB).
4. Will you allow the power of God's Word to work in your life today?