

The Cross of Jesus Christ is the Power: Part Three

2 Peter 1:16

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I shared this story on Thursday evening. But it demonstrates for me that I have no power on my own. I simply and quickly said, "Jesus, what do I do now?" Several scenarios ran through my mind, none of which seemed very good.

I am the Vice-President of the Ohio Baptist Education Society. We meet twice each year to give American Baptist college, seminary, and doctoral students scholarships so they can minister the Gospel. I have to give a report at each meeting.

Thursday was the Annual Meeting in Bellville, Ohio. The weather was beautiful and a scenic ride on the motorcycle was appropriate. So, I logged in a route into my Garmin GPS, attached it to the bike and took off. I was enjoying the ride, but ended up in a small town between here and there. I thought this is odd, why am I here? Believing my ten year old Garmin was wrong I stopped and checked the map on my phone. I was in the right place, going in the right direction to my destination.

I got back on the bike but it wouldn't start. I kept trying until it sounded like the battery was dying. I got off the bike and prayed that quick and simple prayer. When I stop it's usually at a gas station, so I looked around to see if there were any customers. I walked over to a guy who was in his thirties asking if he would jump my battery. He said he would, went home grabbed his jumper cables and came back. We tried three times and nothing.

He offered to take me down the street to the tire shop where there was a mechanic. As we drove there he shared he was on his way home from cardiac rehab. Because of a genetic problem he had recently had by-pass surgery. So, as I was getting out of his truck we shook hands and I prayed for him. This is good stuff, right?

I explained to the owner/mechanic at the tire shop what happened. "Oh, that could be the on/off switch, or the kickstand switch." Do you want me to explain what they are, why they could be a problem? All I knew was I may need to get the bike towed to Coshocton, miss my meeting, and have to explain to Lonie what happened.

He offered to go look at the bike. We tried to start it, nothing. He put up the kick stand up and tried to start it, nothing. He rolled it forward and backward, tried to start it, nothing. He put it in gear, tried to roll it and then put it back in neutral. He tried to start it and it thundered to life. Somehow the bike wasn't in neutral and wasn't in gear. I gave thanks to Jesus.

2 Peter 1:2-3 (NIV) Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

God has promised power and knowledge so we can live good, God honoring lives. We need the power and knowledge of Jesus because we can't live good, God honoring lives. Any attempt on my own power results in a lack of faith and trust or sin.

The expression “just one lie won’t matter” is one of the many downfalls in our lives. That one leads to many more. It doesn’t matter because it’s all sin. We need the knowledge of Jesus. We need the promises of Jesus.

The knowledge of God and Jesus our Lord is a personal experience. When we’ve been forgiven we know it because Jesus has touched our inner most being. Knowing Jesus is unlike any other relationship. We know people, we make emotional connects with one another. Knowing Jesus is even better. We have experienced not only His forgiveness, but His strength, and the awareness that He is always with us. Jesus is not a far off spiritual entity. Some mysterious unknowable being. Jesus is not a rock, or a piece of wood, or sheet of paper. He is not without a voice. Jesus is alive. Jesus through His Holy Spirit dwells in the lives of those who love Him. This is a personal experience that happens all day long forever. May we know this more and more. May we experience more and more of Jesus.

It’s not about us, it’s about Jesus’ power and knowledge for everything we face. No matter what we face today or tomorrow He has given us everything that we need. We have Jesus living within us. We have Jesus as our power. We have the knowledge of Jesus. We are equipped and empowered to face the little stuff and the big stuff.

It is the same power and the same knowledge Jesus possessed as He walked this earth. We see the power of miracles. We hear the knowledge of God Jesus had the power to overcome every temptation. Jesus had the knowledge that even death would not keep Him from being in heaven. We have the power to overcome temptations. We have the knowledge of eternal life in heaven. It’s not a theory, or a feeling. It is personal, Jesus is real. Even when we fall, when we fail, when the task is too big, the burden is too heavy Jesus is there within us. Jesus’ death on the cross and rising from dead was done for each one of us personally.

2 Peter 1:4 (NIV) Through (His own glory and goodness) he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

Human beings don’t want the divine nature because they don’t want to escape evil desires.

People like the pleasure that comes from their desires. Let’s start simple. Brownies gives us pleasure. Being recognized for our effort gives us pleasure. Winning gives us pleasure. We desire things like good food. We have a desire to be rewarded for our hard work. We have a desire to be victorious.

None of what I’m talking about sounds like sin, does it? I talked about foolishness last week. Eating the whole pan of brownies is when desire has become something else. Seeking the recognition of others turns to something more than desire, when it becomes an obsession. Winning at all costs, no matter who gets in the way, is something more than desire.

That’s pretty simple, right? Now let’s compound that with two thoughts. If all that you have ever known is to satisfy your desires, that translates into I can’t give up this desire. Your inability to see beyond your desires to something better, translates into I don’t need anything different.

Without God’s nature we don’t see evil as evil. Without the cross of Jesus there is no way for us to be forgiven of our sins and have Jesus dwell within us. We can’t see our sin and evil without Jesus and His Holy Spirit revealing it to us. That is a never ending circle of ignorance and sin. Jesus’ death on the cross and resurrection changed that circle to a straight line to heaven. Jesus gives us the knowledge that we are sinners. Jesus empowers us to overcome our sin.

In our personal relationship with Jesus we are also able to see who we can become. We see our potential as an individual filled with the Holy Spirit. We see the potential of others who are filled with the Holy Spirit. We see the potential of all those who need Jesus. This Spirit of Jesus reveals to us what we are able to do. The actions that we can take. The changes we can make.

God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are good and only give us what is good. Do you believe this? Do you believe it when a crisis happens? Do you believe it when an illness strikes? Do you believe it when you feel like you are the only Christian?

What I see with my eyes and what I hear with my ears too often makes me question what God is doing. The very promises of God are my lifeline back to Jesus. The promise that Jesus is with me, sustains me. The promise of His grace calls me back to Him. The promise of His good gifts encourages me. The promise of His return and eternal life with Him drives me forward.

2 Peter 1:11 (NIV) You will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The grace and knowledge of Jesus touches your soul, spirit, heart, mind, and body. You get up in the morning, go to work, and you're looking forward to the end of the day. You plant the tomatoes and you're looking forward to eating them. You work days, weeks, months, and years and you're looking forward to a vacation. You go on vacation and you're looking forward to sleeping in your own bed. We need to look forward to something.

Jesus came to earth as an infant looking forward to the Kingdom in Heaven. He left heaven, all of it's glory and majesty, knowing that once He saved the world he would return to heaven. The creator of the world becoming an infant was no small thing. Yet, as a human being facing corruption and evil Jesus looked forward to healing diseases, feeding thousands, proclaiming the truth, and knowing His work would make heaven available to all who believe. He endured negative attitudes, accusations, and betrayal because He wanted people to be in heaven.

Jesus was nailed to the cross looking forward to the Kingdom in Heaven. He was beaten by people who didn't know Him so that they might gain access to heaven. He was mocked and ridiculed by the people who needed Him the most so that they could spend eternity in heaven. He spoke to those who would listen so that they could see their sin, repent, and be in heaven. He promised to all who called upon Him that they would be with Him in heaven that very day. Heaven is His desired goal for all who trust Him.

Jesus rose from the dead so all of us could look forward to the Kingdom in Heaven. After becoming our sin, dying as our sin, removing our sin, Jesus defeated death so we could be in heaven. He didn't stay in that tomb as a victim but rose from the dead so that all of us could live victoriously in heaven with Him. He gave us new life now, power over sin, knowledge of His grace now and forever with Him in heaven.

We are able to look past this moment of corruption to the Kingdom in Heaven. Every time we chose our desires we are choosing the moment and the corrupting power of sin and not the Kingdom of Heaven. Every time we reject Jesus we are choosing our desires and not the Kingdom of Heaven.

Every time we confess our sins, turn to Jesus we claiming our place in the Kingdom of Heaven now and for eternity. Therefore, each day that we stand on the promises of God's grace and knowledge we find ourselves enriched and blessed to live life glorifying Jesus. The knowledge and grace of God,

the salvation of Jesus provided by His death on the cross, the hope of eternal life in heaven drive us to live life glorifying Jesus.

These are not my promises. I am speaking to myself and to you the promises of Jesus, the Savior and Lord of the world. His promises are true His promises are trust worthy. His promises never fail.

2 Peter 1:16 (NIV) We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

You are empowered to share how the Cross has changed your life. The scriptures don't lie, Jesus died on the cross and rose again. This not a mystery, this is not a fantasy, this is not a fictional story.

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Nobody gets to heaven without Jesus. Nobody can be in a right relationship with the Father in heaven without Jesus. The cross where Jesus became our sin made it possible. This is the truth. There is no more important thing to know than the truth. There is no more important decision to make each day than to call upon Jesus.

The work Jesus did on the cross is impacting and changing your life Every day. Jesus is working in you, giving you knowledge, and grace every day. Jesus is working through you that He might be glorified by what you say and what you do. All of this is your witness to the power of the cross of Jesus. We are nothing without Him. We need Him always.

You are in a personal relationship with Jesus. This is your testimony. You have been forgiven of your sins. You are empowered every day. You have are a witness to His grace. You are blessed with eternal life.

This is your testimony. You can talk to Jesus anytime and anywhere. Jesus hears your whining and your praise. Jesus answers your prayers, meets your needs, and gives you hope.

This is your testimony. You have made good choices and bad, Jesus was with you. Your life was seen triumphs and trials, Jesus was with you. You have experience comfort and faced uncertainty, Jesus was with you.

This is your testimony. You are not the same today as you were when you were fifteen. Jesus did that. Your attitudes and your actions are not the same. Jesus did that. Your plans and dreams have evolved and transformed. Jesus did that.

Give your soul, your spirit, your heart, your mind, your body to Jesus. Your present and your future depend on giving your life to Jesus. You don't need to live another day without the power of Jesus Christ. You don't have to experience another crisis without knowing Jesus. You don't need to think for another minute of uncertainty.

Jesus is calling you to him. He is speaking to you about your relationship with Him. Invite Jesus to enter your life. Tell Him you need His mercy and grace. Proclaim to Him your eternal love.