

## STATIC OR DYNAMIC?

Acts 1:7-11

For approximately three years Christ had been endeavoring by precept and example to impress upon all of His disciples the great truths He had come into the world to impart. Because they were still looking for a political kingdom they said, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Christ did not rebuke them on account of the question, nor did He give them a negative answer, but He simply set it aside as being irrelevant. They wanted earthly dominion, whereas He wanted them to have a spiritual dynamic. So He spoke to them about the power which He considered invaluable.

There are two Greek words in the New Testament, both of which are translated "power." They are exousia and dunamis. The former means authority, and the latter means ability. It is the latter, or dunamis, that is used in our text, and it means ability or strength. It is the word from which we get the term "dynamite." It implies power expressed in action. It is not comparable with the power resident in the atom, but with the strength resolved from the atom. This power in the spiritual realm may be compared with atomic power in the physical realm. This power is related to, resident in and resolved by the Holy Spirit.

Noting the difference of these words, our text reads thus: "It is not yours to know times or seasons which the Father put in his own authority (exousia). But ye shall receive power (dunamis) after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Exousia means possessed power, the authority of God. Such power is best measured not by its expression, but by its possession. Its expression is always less than its possession. Its possession is only partially pictured by its expression. Its expression can never exhaust its possession. God's power is bigger than any expression. It is the authority back of all expressed power. When Christ gave His world-wide commission to His church He said, "All authority is mine." Back of the world-wide evangelism of men is His universal authority.

Times and seasons belong to God's authority. He has put them in His own power. Not all the mechanics and mathematics and methods and machinery of men can make or determine spiritual seasons. They belong to God's authority.

Nothing so awakens man's ambition as power. It is sweeter to him than bread to the hungry, sunrise to the benighted or home to the wanderer. The greatest need of every church member today is power from God. Church members have worldly wisdom, culture and talents, but they lack spiritual power. As we think of their powerlessness, we are reminded of the incident when Thomas Aquinas visited Rome and was shown the gorgeousness of the papal palace, and the Pope remarked: "Well, Thomas, the church in our day cannot say: 'Silver and gold have I none.'" "No," replied Aquinas, "neither can she say: 'In the name of Jesus, rise up and walk.'"

Static or dynamic--which? This is a searching question for church members, individually and collectively. "Static" means "pertaining to bodies at rest or in equilibrium." A static person is an individual at rest. A static church is one which is at rest. "Dynamic" means "pertaining to forces not in equilibrium." A dynamic person is an individual in motion. A dynamic church is one which is in action.

Are you a static or dynamic Christian? Recently one observed the lives of many church members and then asked this question: "If Christ means so much to Christians, why do they not talk more about Him to one another and to lost sinners?" That certainly is a good question.

Present-day church members may well be divided into three classes: A small group of people who are surrendered to Christ; a larger group consisting of those who are enlisted in church work, but are not surrendered to Christ; and a still larger group composed of those who are neither enlisted in church work nor surrendered to Christ. The unenlisted and unsundered group is a great liability to any church. The enlisted but unsundered group constitutes a grave danger to any church. Because their idea of Christian work is that of activity instead of reality, they have a form of godliness, but they deny its power. The group that is surrendered to Christ constitutes the only hope of a church.

### I. The Promise Of Power.

Our text contains a glorious promise: "Ye shall receive power." Only through power from on high could they render acceptable service. "Ye shall receive power, ye shall be power-ful, ye shall be dynamic." It is explosive power. It is exerted power--power in action, power that does things, power that puts things across, and power that causes things to happen. "Ye shall be dynamic."

Christ's promise of power is just as applicable to us as it was to the early disciples. It has been fulfilled, but not exhausted. There is an essential difference between the two. A postage stamp once used cannot be used again, but that is not true of a dollar bill. The bill may be soiled and stained, old and torn, yea, even torn in halves and pasted together. That does not matter; whoever has it can present it at the bank and get its equivalent. So it is with this promise. It may pass from lip to lip, from age to age, and be fulfilled thousands of times, but it can still be fulfilled in our lives.

### II. The Person Of Power.

This Person is the Holy Spirit. "Upon the coming of the Holy Spirit upon you." Christians need divine enduement, spiritual compulsion, spiritual energizing, if they are to be dynamic and not static. Those who have wrought wondrous things for the Lord have been the ones who have received the power of the Holy Spirit upon them. He is the only One Who gives us power to do exploits for God, to promote the interests of God's kingdom. The power of the Holy Spirit will be received by us through humble self-emptying, whole-hearted willingness, earnest praying and obedient waiting. As He fills us, He cleanses from sin, empowers us for spiritual tasks and guides us in service.

### III. The Purpose Of Power.

This purpose is very clearly and definitely stated in the words, "Ye shall be My witnesses. What is a witness? A witness is one who knows something and is willing to tell what he knows. A Christian witness is one who tells somebody what he knows about the Lord Jesus with a view to winning him to a saving knowledge of Christ. It is not only the privilege of every believer in Christ to know Him, but also to make Him known to others.

We cannot make times and seasons, but we can witness for Christ. God has kept times and seasons within His own authority, but He has put witnessing in the province of our energized, exercised and expressed power. It is not our business to win the world to Christ, but to witness to the lost for Christ.

Christian witnessing is of two kinds--that of the life and that of the lips. The life speaks even when the lips are silent. Nothing can withstand the witness of a godly life. The life should shine, and the lips should speak for Christ. It is strange how eloquent many church members can be about politics, sports, business and the weather, and yet are silent about Christ, salvation and spiritual things. The things we love most and value the highest are the ones about which we speak so freely and most frequently.

One need not sit in a courtroom very long until he learns that the influence of the

testimony of a witness upon the jury depends largely upon the character of the witness. That is doubly true in the realm of religion. The influence that your testimony for Christ is going to have will depend very largely upon your Christian character. When a person, who is living a beautiful and consistent Christian life, testifies for Christ, his testimony will be very effective.

Are you as a church member making any deep impression on those around you, moving them to thoughts about God, proclaiming to them the grace of God and calling them to salvation by Christ? Or, are you like those early disciples, who were so busy looking toward heaven that they were static instead of dynamic? They were standing instead of moving, fixed instead of functioning.

"Ye shall be dynamic" promised Christ. "Why are ye static?" challenged the heavenly messengers. Dynamic means power-ful. Static means power-less. Christ said the disciples should be going in power. But here they were standing gazing into heaven. Christ said they should be dynamic. But here they were static.

Two traveling men stopped one Sunday at the same hotel in a certain Southern city, the one a believer, the other an unbeliever. The believer persuaded the unbeliever to go to church with him. A man to whom God had given the power (dunamis) of witnessing in greeting shook hands with them. At night the unbeliever invited the believer to go with him to the same church again and gave as his reason: "That man who shook hands with me at the door this morning has something I haven't. I want to go back and shake hands with him again."

Our text presents two types of church members--static and dynamic. The static church members do not give testimony to God and do not move people to thoughts of God. They do not give testimony beyond this world's power and efficiency. The dynamic church members give testimony for the Lord and move people to thoughts of God and the miracle of salvation through Christ.

Church members without dynamic power from God cannot be witnesses to a living Lord. God give us praying passion and dynamic power to be good witnesses in utterance and stewardship of His supernatural power and grace, "both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."