**God Has Given Us Power**

 **BY
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**Message Intro:**

Let me ask you a question. What are we doing here? What impact, if any, do we make on others around us? Do you ever feel at times that you are not in control, especially when things seem to fall apart? As Christians, should we have more power to control our destiny than others? The Bible speaks of us being more than conquerors and having some kind of victorious life with Christ, but what does that mean and what does it look like? We are going to take a few minutes to examine the kind of power Christ expected us to have.

**Text:**

Mt 16:13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?
14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.
15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?
16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.
17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.
18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. {Peter: this name signifies a rock}
19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
20 Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.
(KJV)

**Message:**

Jesus took his disciples to a particular region called Caesarea Philippi. Many get confused when the Bible mentions *coasts* in verse 13, but it actually means *region*. There is no seacoast in this area but only a small stream, which happens to be the start of the Jordan River. It is a beautiful stream that flows down into the Sea of Galilee, which happens to a large fresh water lake.

Caesarea Philippi lies in the upper end of Israel. The first thing that “stands out” to any visitor is a massive wall of rock. It is several stories high and looks as if someone sliced the mountain in half, leaving one to look at this flat stone formation that towers hundreds of feet high. Israel is not considered a large mountainous country, if fact, many mountains spoken about in the Bible are merely hills. What makes this so amazing is its size.

I believe Christ had specific reasons to come to this region. First of all, Christ only had about 6 months remaining in his ministry. Secondly, Christ had often instructed His disciples on how to minister and perform miracles, only to be disappointed by their lack of performance and faith. With time running out in His ministry, Christ had to show them something in a way that would make a lasting impression and prove beyond a doubt of who He is. I believe it was more that just a statement, “Upon this rock I'll build the church.”

Most of us have heard this story many, many times and have come to the conclusion that Peter's revelation of who Christ was is the real foundation for all believers, He is the Son of God, that would later die on the cross for the redemption for our sins. While this prevailing thought is absolutely true, I believe there is more to the story.

There are times in our life that we know the truth. And there are other times when the truth goes beyond knowing and it brings forth life. It is almost like a light bulb that comes on in our head, we finally get it!!! Turn to your neighbor and ask them, have you ever been there? I believe that Peter not only had a revelation of **who** Christ was but **understood** for the first time of all Christ had been teaching them, they can do also. That knowledge, that revelation, that understanding is as great as the large mountain before them. Our faith, in itself, can move mountains. I believe Christ was not talking about a small rock or hill, He was stating that this type of thinking, believing and understanding is as great as this huge mountain that lies before them and this type of belief can **move mountains**!

Let me share another thought with you. You may not be aware of what this region was like during the time of Christ. (Listed below are 7 key things about this region)

1. It was a **seed region of Baal**. The False God. Idolatry was prevalent, probably even when Christ and His disciples were there. On the side of this large rock mountain, were places cut out for the worship of idols. They were constantly burning idols and incense.
2. It was **soaked in Mythology**. The Greek god Pan was born in this region. He was ½ man and ½ goat that runs around playing a flute. The Romans and Greeks did not want a temple in their region because of the perversion and was too wild for their society, so they chose Caesarea Philippi. They wanted this type of worship of “anything goes” with play, sex, and so on, without any boundaries to be far, far away.
3. **Immorality**. Out of Baal, there were cults of sexual behaviors, fertility cults, probably blatantly happening in front of the disciples at this time.
4. **Humanistic**. Another temple by Herod in tribute to Caesar is erected on top of this mountain. This marble temple was to worship Caesar as a god and was names after Caesar's son, Philip.
5. **Nimrod's Fortress**. This is a response of the evil in this part of the country. Mohammad, Islamic extremist, terrorism started from this region. There is a cave that can house over 500 people for a whole year. Inside this cave is a pit, where it is said one could look down to hell itself. Nimrod rejected God, faith, and was rebellious. The king of Babel.
6. **Further in this region, swine went into the sea**. This was a very wicked area. Perverse in sin.
7. **This is a region of immorality, homosexuality, environment with no boundaries and no morals.** One could say it is a SIN SMORGSBORG!!!

There were three firsts:

1. Christ had never taken His disciples to this region before.
2. The word “church” is first mentioned here. I first thought of Peter's statement as being like a “seed”, like a grain of mustard seed that can move mountains but I still believe Christ was showing more to His disciples.
3. He also quizzes His disciples, “Who do you say I am?” It was more than just to state “He is the Son of God”, it was showing His disciples firsthand that he is more powerful than anything Hell could throw at Him.

What was Christ trying to show the disciples and the church? He was trying to show them that nothing can stop Him, nothing is more powerful than Him, and He even took them to the very pit of Hell!

This message is to let you know Christ has already been there for us. He has already fought the battle and won. No matter what evil forces or battles you may be facing, He says, “Greater is He that is in me (us) than he that is in the world! He is telling the church that “whatsoever you bind on earth, will be bound in heaven; whatsoever you loose on earth, will be loose in heaven.”

Christ went on to die on the cross for all of us to have that type of power. In fact the Bible says He went to Hell itself and got the keys to Hell, death, and the grave. He was on the mount of Transfiguration to show the world, that He is victorious, nothing can stop the powers of God, and that the enemy is defeated. Peter, no doubt, looked around all the evil forces and understood that nothing could hinder or hurt Christ or any of the disciples. If we can only see through the eyes of Peter of what all the enemy tried to do, we could easily be excited about reading the scripture, “Greater things ye shall do in My name because I am with the Father'! Peter went beyond the natural to see the supernatural.

**Conclusion:**

I don't know what battles you may be facing today but I believe God is encouraging today's church to walk in His power and might, not being bothered, hindered, or defeated by the things around us but understand He has already been there and defeated the enemy. No matter what Caesarea Philippi's you may be facing, no matter what mountains that are before you (illness, sin, finances, marriage problems), I believe the victory is ours through Jesus Christ, we just have to show up! What type of power do you believe in?