

The Power of God

By

David Winecoff

PRESENTATION: National Prayer Breakfast, Beaverton, Oregon, May 3, 2007

AUDIENCE: Two hundred plus leaders and citizens; mayor, city council, business, civic and religious and family leaders.

PURPOSE of TALK: To pose and answer the question: *What does a Christian have to offer that is special and different by living his faith in the dangerous times in which we now live?*

THEME: Motivate and inspire Christians to live more boldly for Christ thereby giving God increased opportunity to demonstrate his power through their bold witness.

PRAY FOR CITY OFFICIALS: Jeremiah 29:7 “Pray for the officials in the cities in which you find yourselves, so I can bless you through their administration.”

Mayor:	Rob Drake
President of Counsel:	Dennis Doyle
Counsel member:	Catherine Arnold
Counsel member:	Betty Bode
Counsel member:	Catherine Stanton
Counsel member:	Bruce Dalrymple

PRESENTATION OUTLINE: ***“THE POWER OF GOD”*** (40 min)

I. INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

- a. **Gain Attention.** Good morning fellow Americans and friends of Christ. We are gathered today on this National Day of Prayer:
*to acknowledge God,
to celebrate his goodness, and
to invoke his divine help for our nation.*

We come together on this national day of prayer in cities across America to pray in one accord. To really believe this occasion will make a difference we must know and trust God is working in our personal lives in response to private prayer. Otherwise this becomes just an annual civic ceremony. This morning may be a time to think outside the box. I have been invited to speak boldly with you about faith.

b. Motivation. All of us are leaders. Or you wouldn't be here today. Many study leadership to better accomplish professional duties. For two years I managed the worldwide leadership training program for the Marines. Marines study great leadership accomplishments as a way of preparing for future challenges. Their training recognizes all followers as future leaders. In combat when a leader falls another man steps in to take his place. The enemy knows you must stop the last man to stop the attack.

- c. **Organization.** In the next 35 minutes I will discuss the most important aspect of leadership, its spiritual component. One of the great military leaders in history, Napoleon Bonaparte, said: “The moral is to the physical as three to one.” Leaders are responsible for the accomplishment of their organization's mission. God also expects leaders to guard the general welfare of those in the organization. Leaders must provide moral as well as intellectual and physical leadership, or they short their people. I want to tackle a **vital question this morning: *What can a Christian offer that is special and different by living one's faith in the presence of others?***

Later we will stand and pray for what concerns us. Right now some have personal concerns that are overwhelming. For all of us to **war the good warfare** this morning, we need to know God is working out individual problems. No one here would intentionally weaken the collective prayer

effort this morning. But that's what major distractions do. They take our minds elsewhere.

TRANSITION SENTENCE. To help those being attacked by overwhelming distractions this morning I want to give a short teaching on how to fight the enemy who might have your attention this morning. I'll start with the present Situation.

II. BODY OF TALK (27 minutes)

1. THE SITUATION. (10 min) In combat before a leader gives a combat order he addresses the present situation by talking about the enemy and our friends.

First, the enemy situation: Local distractions are a major enemy in our local battles. The common distractions of life can be our worst enemy keeping us from a Godly focus. Few today are aware how distracted the church has become. All of us are engaged in battles on several of the many fronts of life. Some are heavily engaged on the economic front. For others it may be a social, political, spiritual or the important home front struggles. Of course our hearts go out to families supporting a loved one overseas in a combat zone. For those engaged in battle it often seems a lonely, disheartening struggle. Isolation, discouragement and failure are common. It can seem that only a minority really care about the larger issues of life like overcoming sin and selfishness.

Barna Research just published that over 100 million Americans are now unchurched. Growing numbers see the church as irrelevant. Some openly joke about the church. These are challenging times.

What about the situation among those who should care? Believers are not powerless in the face of mounting challenges in America. God promises and has ordained supernatural power to help each of us make a difference in this life.

Supernatural power really is available to praying Christians. *God really will step in* to transform situations we face right now that on the surface are overwhelming. God's Spirit roams the world looking for whom he can show himself strong on behalf of those who trust him.

The collective strength of America is the single strength of millions of individuals who will unite in a great cause. Polls tell us most American still have a common faith in God. Its hard to believe with the steady dose of bad news fed to us daily. This common faith drew us together this morning. All don't see faith the same way. I will talk about the faith that has sustained me in difficult times. We will look closely at one scripture to answer a basic question. ***Can one verse in the Bible if believed transform a situation*** that appears hopeless? We all know of individual situations that seem hopeless. It is personal faith in what God promises that causes him to step in and transform hopeless situations.

In the Marines before they teach you how to fight as a member of larger and larger teams, they teach you how to fight and win against that one enemy standing in front of you. Mentally picture a "giant" problem you face right now. Giants in our lives need to be overcome to have a testimony that inspires others. Like David we must slay our Goliath.

A few here may not be facing Goliath right now, but many are. **Could I see a show of hands of those facing a difficult problem?**

The Apostle Paul was such a leader. Consider his historic accomplishments in the face of great danger. He is worth studying no matter one's focus. This great apostle of faith was the principal forerunner in the most dynamic, successful fighting organization in history, the church. Many in Christianity view the church as a hospital. Scripture portrays us as an army. The role of armies is to fight. Enlistees are expected to cooperate in being changed from civilians to soldiers trained in warfare. A Christian's primary weapons are spiritual because our primary enemy is spiritual. We don't war against human flesh, but ***"against ...the rulers of the forces of darkness."***

America's present dominance in the world can't be understood without spiritual understanding. Our strong position won't be maintained by leaders who lack supernatural strength. In Paul's epistle to the **Romans, chapter one, verse sixteen Paul shows how to appropriate supernatural power:** He says: ***"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation."***

Paul wrote two thirds of the directives in the New Testament under constant threat of death. Some have little understanding of the great accomplishments

of authentic Christianity. Can you see that the church is the greatest fighting organization in history?

America's Marines have been around two hundred and thirty one years. Some believe them to be the greatest fighting force. Read the personal testimonies of great Marines. You will discover the moral force that propelled them to super human accomplishment. Neither America nor the Marines would have accomplished much without Christians.

Believers, the great apostle helped inspire, have prevailed ten times longer against every attempt to destroy them. Consider an overcomer's staying power! Those who truly believe have no equals. Yes evil is on the rampage in many places today where Christians live. I want to show you today why we need not fear.

Other long enduring civilizations achieved many things whose basis of belief was another faith such as: Shintoism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Such faiths have millions of followers. We are here today united by American's moral underpinning, the Judeo-Christian faith. We have achieved spectacular success in the face of great obstacles through supernatural power. There are three key words in Romans 1: 16: **Gospel...power and salvation.** I want to show their application before we stand and pray for America.

TRANSITION SENTENCE: Look at the word, GOSPEL.

2. THE GOSPEL. (3 min) What in the world does this word mean? Is it a practical word today? A two-word definition is good news. Most Americans have heard the good news that Jesus died bearing punishment we deserve to destroy the power of death for those who accept his free gift, turn to Him as LORD and turn their backs on sin.

What about its application today? Does it have relevance today? It depends. Jesus came 2,000 years ago to make a difference today not just after we die. There is much good news in the Bible now for those who will appropriate it. We are promised supernatural overcoming power that transforms situations when applied.

One scholar counted the good news verses. He counted 30,000 promises. And God is not a liar. It is up to us to get a hold of the promise we need to day. His promises range through healing, deliverance, provision, reconciliation, protection, ending with eternal life. Gospel is a highly practical word.

Few appropriate supernatural help. Most of us rely on our natural strength, talent, position and influence; and if that fails the generosity of others. Most believe God will do what he says in his word he will do, but few ask God for specific help. When we sincerely begin to trust what his word says that is what God calls faith. His promises are transformed into the power of God when believed and appropriated.

There are specific promises we can contend for that we miss out on if we are ignorance of God's word. The main problem is not our moral failures. Yes our moral lapses are embarrassing and grievous to God. We need to repent when we fall short. But lack of knowledge of what God wants to do is our real problem. Hosea, the Prophet said: ***“my people perish for lack of knowledge.”***

When I personally had a revelation that all God's promises are true, and appropriated a healing promise for my daughter, Mary; seeing an instant miracle my faith jumped to a whole new level. This Christian life became exciting, and remains so.

TRANSITION SENTENCE: Look at the second key word.

3. POWER. (3 min) What is meant by the power of God? We need supernatural power to overcome a supernatural enemy. Have you been socked by failure, hopelessness, despair, depression? The Bible shows us why, and how to overcome such attacks.

There are many power verses in the Word of God that will transform a bad situation. Appropriate the supernatural power of God!

Look at **MARK 16:17**: ***“Signs like these will follow those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; they will cast out demons; they will lay hands on the sick and they will recover, they will drink deadly poison without harm.”***

This promise is true. This verse is about supernatural help against a supernatural enemy. To be victorious we need supernatural overcoming power. Learn how to back the hidden enemy back into Hell where he belongs. He is good at disguising himself. We usually focus on humans. It is easy to think they are the problem. **Who comes to mind you have not forgiven for an offense? ... Maybe they were simply taken over. Forgiveness is important** in these situations. We must humble ourselves for supernatural help. Trust God.

Is anyone at the end of natural ability and will power? Look to supernatural power.

We know God can help us. Many just don't know God wants to help. He has already promised in His word. Sadly many go through their entire life never memorizing even one promise of God.

TRANSITION SENTENCE. The third key word is...

4. SALVATION. (2 min) Everyone gets ambushed in life. We know eternal salvation is important. But God also promises salvation in overwhelming situations.

Consider key relationships? God can divinely intervene today.

What about health? He knows stamina and health are fundamental to complete God given tasks.

How about finances? He promises sufficient resources to his children.

How about the desire to see a loved one's life turn around who is going full speed in the wrong direction? God's expressed will is clear. He provides help. Don't limit this word Salvation to eternity.

TRANSITION SENTENCE. How do we put these three words: gospel, power and salvation together for a desired result?

- III. **WHEN WORDS BECOME POWER** (9 min) *Personal faith is like glue. You need a strong faith to bind a promise of God to a particular situation so he will transform it.*

Watch God show himself strong on your behalf when you apply a promise of God to a difficult leadership situation through a prayer of faith. When you develop the personal faith needed God will demonstrate the power of his word. Things begin to change for the better when we trust what he says. Expect Satan to counterattack. You have power over him. His game plan is to get you confess negative circumstances rather than belief in God's word. Soldiers learn to fight. Civilians expect others to fight.

God will not allow his word to fail. Trust his promises. He will send his power. See positive change by standing on his truth. **Hope is only hope when you are looking to God and his written word.**

What of provision? God promises provision.

PHILIPPIANS 4:19: *“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus”*

MATTHEW 6:33: *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you*

What about deliverance and physical protection?

LUKE 10:19, *“Behold I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing by any means shall hurt you.”*

PSALM 91 is all about physical protection from harm in the face of evil.

There are many promises in scripture. They are good as gold. Find and act on one for today.

There are two basic strategies in life in solving problems: The Direct Approach. It seems to be the easiest way. It is direct and simple. But that is the way the enemy expects you to go. There is a second way. An indirect Approach. This way requires more planning and time. It seems a harder way to go. However a study of History has shown the military the Indirect Approach is overwhelmingly more successful to achieve the objective.

For Christians the direct approach is to approach problems only in the natural realm: ideals, opinions, persuasion, friendships, emotion and

intellect. For a believer the indirect approach would be to go to God privately in prayer. Remind him of a promise he has made in scripture, that you believe fits your situation. Then contend for the promise asking him to help you the way he helped another.

Look at PSALM 50:14-17: *“Offer unto God thanksgiving and pay thy vows to the most High: Then call upon Him in the day of trouble: He will deliver you; and you shall glorify Him.”* God is not a respecter of persons. He will do for you what he did for another.

What about health problems? He will keep us from getting sick, or help us recover.

PSALM 107:20: *“He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.”*

ISAIAH 53:4-5: *“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”*

1 PETER 2: 24: *“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed”:*

Acts 10:38: *“...he healed all that were oppressed of the devil.”*

JAMES 5: 14: *“Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”*

God loves us. Sickness doesn't come from God. Fight the flu with the word of God. When I began to do so... it could no longer get established in me, and now backs off. What about a major illness? Find a supernatural deliverance promise. Stand on it. Treat sickness symptoms like enemy attacks. I lay hands on any discomfort immediately I become aware it is attacking me. I command the symptom to leave in Jesus; Name. I appropriate a clear promise of God that comes to mind. The symptom

always leaves me, I no longer doubt! How could I pray for others in faith, if I didn't believe in healing and miracles for myself?

It is best to memorize power verses ahead of attacks. Successful armies drill these important combat procedures into the habits of soldiers. When the attack comes their responses are automatic. As I drill in good scriptural habits, my faith soars. I now treat the Word of God like the **two-edged sword** scripture tells me it is. My faith in what God says has a positive natural outcome when I pray.

TRANSITION SENTENCE: Lets conclude.

IV. CONCLUSION (8 minutes) My Father had a fear of God and a quiet allegiance to Jesus Christ. He set a good example. But he was not a Bible reader. Therefore he was not specifically aware what God wanted to do for him in the area of health.

He was blessed in many ways but died of pancreatic cancer at age 69. This was not God's perfect will. Cancer comes from hell, not heaven. I adopted the religious practices I became familiar with growing up in our home.

Religion can be comfortable. It was for me. But it was too impersonal. It took me time. But eventually I realized I needed a close personal relationship. When the enemy attacks becomes personal you need to know the general of the army personally. The when we cry for help we know he will respond.

Pastors in this room will tell you they have found a more personal faith in Jesus Christ to be intensely practical. Could I see a show of hands of believers who have such a testimony of God's faithfulness? (*A show of hands! Thank you! 2/3s of us have raised our hands*)

I am 68 and still excited to get up in the morning to see what God is saying in his written word for me today and to see what he will do in my life and those who I care about.

There is far more to faith in Jesus Christ than a simple comfortableness with the religious life and a promised hope of eternity. The intimate life with God is the real adventure. Look also at the direct benefits.

A few here today may not have discovered yet these very practical benefits in the here and now. There is a short passage in **PSALM 103**: where King David outlines these benefits to himself:

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” David of the Bible was attacked often. Yet he lived 120 years reigning as King for forty. His son Solomon reigned another forty years in peace. God’s benefits are real.

Of the 30,000 promises in the Bible the only ones that are real are the one’s personally discovered and appropriated. For those whose relationship is not deep, “SEEING IS BELIEVING.”

But for the believer who has been transformed by a personal revelation of Christ, and goes deeper in faith by seeking a daily relationship with the “Holy Spirit” and the “written word” such a person begins to discover that “BELIEVING in one of God’s promises and standing on it becomes SEEING.”

Our nation needs radical transformation. Each of us needs to take charge in our own sphere of influence in the spiritual realm using the strategy of the Indirect Approach. Go to your knees in prayer for what concerns you. Use the divine power of holy declarations. **Job 22:28** tells us to: *“Declare a matter and God will establish it.”* Stand on his promises for results important to you.

My personal testimony is this: God is faithful. He is faithful to preserve me, my wife, our children through challenging times and circumstances. Jesus Christ is faithful to perform his word. I trust him and stand his promises when the enemy attacks. Live a transformed life in his supernatural power. Know God’s promises. Believe they are meant for you and me. Don’t doubt no matter the delay.

Finally, IN CLOSING: What does a believer have to offer others? **A dynamic, personal testimony of God’s transforming gospel power in the life of one who believes.**

Thank you for being here today on this National Day of Prayer to pray with brothers and sisters in the Beaverton area for what concerns us.