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THE PATH AND THE POWER

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I WANT you to look at these words in Colossians I:11-
"Strengthened with all might according to His glorious
power." Now here is power for the walk. When God calls us
unto life, He calls us to walk before Him. And when He calls us to
walk before Him, He provides the power that we need in order to
do so. But we need something more than power in order to walk
before God: we need a *path*. Many seem to think it is only a
question of power." Oh, if I had only the power! "But there is
something before the power: it is the path. How many want the
power to follow their own path. We map out our future; we know
what we should like, and we say, "Lord, give me the power to
follow this path." The power does not come, and then we learn
that God promises His power only along His own path. Let us take
these two thoughts—the path and the power.

I. What is the PATH? There is the path of His will. "Filled
with the knowledge of His will." The path of His favour, "unto all
pleasing." The path of His fruitfulness, "fruitful in every good work."

First, there is the path of His *will*. It is a beautifully simple life, the
true life of trust, simply following the will of the Lord. It may be
a very humble life, but there is nothing higher than doing the will of
the Lord. The way to do the Lord's work is to walk along the path
of the Lord's will. All the work is in the path of the will. And
what a blessed thought it is, that God has a will concerning each one
of us individually. He has a gracious purpose concerning each one of
His children.

And another thing let us remember: that that will may be
ascertained, may "be known, and that it may be done. " Filled
with the knowledge of His will," "understanding what the will of
the Lord is." "Thy will be done."

Now we know that to do the will of the Lord is utterly im-
possible for us: it is not only difficult, it is impossible. But then, the
Lord calls us to do the impossible work, and to walk the
impossible walk. We have it in the gospels. You remember when
the Lord told His disciples to do an impossible work: "Give ye them
to eat." Was that possible? They were in the wilderness with

five thousand people. How many loaves had they? Just a few, and two or three little fishes. "Give ye them to eat." That is a hard command, but they did it. You say, "But, they didn't do it, the Lord did it." Precisely; that is the thing we are teaching. Before the Lord wrought the miracle things had to be adjusted. There was the multitude who were to sit down, that was the outer circle; then the disciples were to come within, there was the inner circle; but there is only one centre, that is Christ. Now things are adjusted. Where are the loaves? "Bring them to me." They were not to work from themselves, they were to work from Christ, the centre. There is the secret of all work. So the loaves were brought and put into the Lord's hands, and He looked unto His Father, and then the stream flowed from Him through the disciples to the empty vessels, and it went on till they were all filled. You say, "The Lord did that." Yes, and yet the disciples did it. They obeyed the Lord's command.

Apply that to the difficulties of daily life. The difficulties arise because you have a wrong centre—yourself. You take the centre "enable Me," and of course you break down. "Believe ye that I am able?" When the Lord takes the centre, it makes all the difference in the world. Where there is this adjustment, and you let the Lord take the right place, then the will of the Lord is done.

Then there was the impossible walk of Peter stepping out upon the water. "But Peter attained to that," you say, "and what a wonderful attainment! I have not attained to that." You make a great mistake. It was impossible for Peter to walk upon the water, utterly impossible. When he came upon the water, he had his eye fixed upon Christ, and Christ had His power underneath Peter, and it mattered not how heavy Peter was. There was the adjustment. But the moment He looked away the connection was broken, and he sank. And so the power is in Christ, not in attainment; it is moment by moment, the communication of divine power meeting our tendency to sink. You say, "I do not think the blessing I got could be a real blessing, because I lost it." That does not follow. You got out of it. It will continue so long as you keep trusting. And so I say, the work before us can be done if we bring the Lord into it; it all depends upon that. "All things are possible unto God," and so you see the power is found in the will of the Lord. Do not be afraid of the will; if you have the Lord He gives the power.

Then another thought: it is the path of His *smile*. How blessed a thing it is to be walking "in the light, as God is in the light." It is our privilege to live in constant communion with God. You say, "Give me a passage of Scripture to prove that." "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in

darkness, but shall have the light of life." Now if we believe such passages as these, our faith will grow. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." But it depends upon what you are looking at. If you are looking at your work, your progress will be little. There was a certain ploughman, a good man, an excellent servant in many ways, but I heard a farmer say he was a miserable ploughman because, while he was driving the plough, he was continually looking back to see if he made a straight furrow; the consequence was it was always a crooked one. There is only one way to drive a plough—steadily to look before you. Do not look at your attainments, but to the Lord, walking in His smile. And in proportion as you know the true life, you will find it is a simple life. "Unto all pleasing." Not pleasing all people. Did you ever try to please everybody? You cannot do that. It means pleasing the Lord in all things; and when you please the Lord you have His smile, and that is enough.

Again, it is the path of His *fruitfulness*. "*Fruitful* in every good work." Must I be occupied with all kinds of good work? That is what many Christians are trying to do. It does not mean that. There is a difference between work and fruit. Work is the result of action. Fruit is the outcome of life; there is an organic connection between fruit and the believer. Fruit is the overflow of the sap. Now there are some people who seem to have only just enough sap to keep them in existence, and certainly not enough for fruit. What they want is fulness of life. You have life, so you are a Christian; if you had fulness of life you would be a fruitful Christian. A Sunday-school teacher says, "I have laboured for -weeks and months, and I see no fruit." But does not the Lord see fruit? "No; there are no conversions." Ah, but I am not talking about conversions. What is this fruit? Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness . . . While you are engaged in the work, be fruitful in these things. Some are murmuring, some are jealous, some are envious. They are not fruitful. This fruit is "the fruit of the Spirit." You may be fruitful wherever you are. All of us can be fruitful. Every moment of the day, we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. "Ye are the branches; the branch cannot bring forth fruit of (from) itself"; it is "the fruit of the Spirit." Do not grieve the Spirit, and the first thing He will do will be to fill your heart with love, joy, and peace; and when the inner condition is right, then the outward conduct will be right. We see here then the path in which we have to walk; the path of His will, of His smile, of His fruitfulness. And every moment we can be fruitful: that is the grand thing. "Herein is my father glorified"—that "ye are the means of converting many souls"?

No; but "that ye bear much fruit." Leave the conversion of souls to the Lord, and if you are fruitful there will be conversions.

II. There is the POWER. I like to notice that it is in the passive voice: "Being strengthened." It is not the result of your own struggles. It is like that other passage in Timothy: "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." Be willing to be empowered. That is the force of the exhortation. You cannot strengthen yourself; capacity to receive belongs to you, ability to accomplish belongs to the Lord. You can receive the strong One, and then you are strengthened. This is the way the blessing comes. There is a kind of toy fountain which, when wound up, plays beautifully for a time, and then runs down. So sometimes souls seek conventions to wind them up. That is self-centred; there is the resolution, there is the effort. You have the winding up, and then the running down. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well." How beautiful it is in the Revised Version, "The water that I shall give him shall *become* in him." "Shall *become*" as a fresh experience of an old gift. You have the water. Yes. But now it has become to you a spring overflowing, and the friction and strain have been taken out of your life. We want strengthening "with all might according to His glorious power." First notice it is *divine* power. You say, "of course, every blessing that comes from God is divine." But I want you to notice that it is divine in this sense: we speak of the life of God, the life that He gives; but the life that He *lives* is another thing. God gives me life, but He comes into my heart and lives His life. So here is His power; God is not going to give me power. God gave power to the first man, and man failed, and He is never going to give power to man again. He gives power to Christ. You want power, then you must have Christ. That power is something that He exercises. A weapon has no power in itself. Supposing a giant lays hold of it, the power in the arm of the giant is now in the weapon. "And I was strengthened as the hand of the Lord my God was upon me" (Ezra 7:28). That is the secret of the power. Again, it is *sufficient* power. "Strengthened with *all* might." I love that little word "all." I like it to stand as it is: "all might." Then there is enough, there is sufficient power. He might promise *much* might, or *some* might, but it is "all might," then it is enough.

And notice it is "*glorious*" power. Take it as it may be translated literally, "strengthened with all might according to *the power of His glory*." What does that mean? In Ephesians 1:7 I read, "the riches of His *grace*," but when I turn to 3:16 I read, "according to the riches of His *glory*." What is the difference? "Riches of His grace"—Christ on the cross. "In Him we have

redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." We all have that, if we are Christians. Now in the third chapter we read, "That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory to be strengthened . . ." It is a prayer for converted people, for saved souls, a prayer for fuller blessing, the very thing we have come here for. What are the "riches of His glory"? Christ on the throne. Christ on the cross—pardon, redemption; Christ on the throne—anointing, power for service, the gift of the Holy Ghost, the fulness of the Spirit. We see, then, that it is the power of His glory—the Holy Ghost. The coming of the Holy Ghost was prophetically revealed in the Old Testament, and historically fulfilled in the New. And what is the next thing? That the blessing should be experimentally realised. That is what we want; we want this power in us, working in us. Are you willing? Have you yielded yourself for this? What keeps you back? You say "Yes, but I am not ready to follow His will. I must think about it first." "Am I willing to give myself wholly to God's will?" "Am I ready?" "and you draw a deep sigh; as Frances Havergal said once: "God's will was once to me a *sigh*; now it is a *song*." And when we get a view of God's will, we fall in love with it. We see it is a blessed thing; it is something joyous. This is the true spirit of consecration.

Then observe, as to the power—it is *practical*. It is "unto all patience." Is it not wonderful, after all these heights of grace, that we come down suddenly to such a commonplace duty as patience? One of the commonest of sins among Christian people is impatience. You are engaged in some Christian work, and somebody forgets some important duty. You say, "I have no patience with that man!" You need not feel thus, for there is power for this—"all patience." You needn't be afraid of the divine requirement, because there is the divine provision of power. You observe, there is the "all might." Link that with the "all patience." The power is sufficient to meet the requirement. You know, difficulty is a relative term; it depends whether you have power enough. "But can I be patient always?" Certainly. "But must I not make a desperate effort?" No. Let the Lord possess you, and you will discover, as the Lord takes His right place within you, that you become strongest on your weakest side. The impatient man then becomes gentle. Remember this, then, that we have a divine provision to meet the divine requirement. The power is divine, sufficient, glorious and practical.

Now, dear friends, we see all this; but there are certain conditions. We cannot enter into these blessings unless we are in the right relation to God. Are we all really consecrated to God? Have we handed ourselves right over to Him, that we may be at

His disposal? Are you prepared for that? Someone says, "I feel that I am not prepared for this. It is no use saying that I am. I do not want to be a decided Christian." Lots of such thoughts come into our heads. But for myself, I can say that it was a blessed moment when I made no reserves. I just handed myself over to the Lord, and then I discovered that His holy will was not something terrible and dark and dismal. I never knew what true soul-rest was till that moment. I knew the joy of conversion, I mean of pardon; I knew that that had been a marked crisis in my life; but it was some time after that before I saw the glorious privilege of walking with God, as Enoch walked, and having the testimony that we please God, walking in fellowship with Him, and having all one's needs supplied, realising that there is an all-sufficient provision. For every "I need" in self, there is an "I am" in Christ—man's emptiness and God's fulness meeting.

Now, each soul may be brought to this point: *the last thing may be yielded*. And the last thing is very often *unbelief*. We have dropped this and that and the other sin, we are willing to give up worldliness, but we do not *believe*. No, we are waiting to realise, we want to *feel* we have faith. There is seeking faith, and there is resting faith. The nobleman of Capernaum had seeking faith when he went fifteen miles to find Jesus; but he carried a heavy burden. "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." "Lord, come down ere my child die," Jesus saith unto him, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." Here was the critical moment. "And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way." That was resting faith, and the burden was dropped. What did he believe? That his son was healed. He went back at his leisure, and the servants met him and said, "Thy son liveth." "When did he begin to get better?" "Yesterday, at the seventh hour," at the very time the Lord had spoken.

A great many people have a faith that seeks, but they have not a faith that rests. Now we want them to rest; the Lord is here, rest on Him, let the burden go. "Lord, I trust Thee now; I cast myself on Thee now. Lord, as I think about my home troubles, my business troubles, my own individual difficulties in every sphere of life, I bring them all, and commit them all to Thee and rest in Thee; keep me." And believe that He keeps you. I am sure this rest of faith is the centre of all true activity. You cannot work without friction until you have this rest of faith—perfect dependence not only on what the Lord has done, but on what He is to you this moment. Rest in Him. "God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye always (not sometimes) having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good

work" (2 Cor. 9:8). Is that really so? Then away with every anxious thought. "Lord, I trust Thee; I hand myself wholly over to Thee; and as Thou has pardoned me and saved me from the penalty of sin, so now be Thou my keeper." The responsibility of keeping you belongs to Him: but the responsibility of trusting Him to keep you, belongs to you. Now let us trust Him.