

God is... Omnipotent
Ps 68: 28-35, Eph 1: 15-23

Brothers and sisters, I don't know if you've ever paid much attention to comic book heroes, but they've been increasingly hard to ignore over the past fifteen years, given the runaway success of the Marvel Cinematic Universe. We've been introduced to Iron Man, Spiderman, Black Panther and a host of other individuals who have amazing powers and abilities.

And what strikes me about these superhero stories is how they start off small, but then they get bigger and bigger and bigger... what do I mean? Well, all of these heroes (apart from Thor) start off as ordinary human beings. It's true they might be extra smart, super rich, exceptionally athletic or virtuous but they are only humans... but through some random incident, accident or series of circumstances they acquire extraordinary powers.

Iron Man somehow creates his technologically advanced armored suit... Spiderman gets bitten by a radioactive spider and ends up with super strength and super reflexes and can

shoot webs... Captain America takes a super-soldier serum and is transformed from a skinny kid into a ripped super human... you get the picture.

And each of their stories starts off with these heroes fighting ordinary human bad guys who have ordinary abilities and regular weapons. And because our heroes have superhuman powers they can easily defeat these bad guys - even if they are vastly outnumbered.

But in the sequels, they begin to face more powerful villains - who also have superhuman powers and victory becomes more challenging. And as the stories of the Marvel Universe have unfolded, we've seen how the villains start to become increasingly more and more powerful... The Avengers aren't just fighting against Hydra anymore, now they have to defend New York against a powerful alien invasion from the other side of the galaxy...

And each subsequent movie that comes out introduces us to a new threat, a more powerful villain, and eventually it all

culminates with the most powerful villain of all – Thanos! He is determined to collect all five of the powerful infinity stones, combine them together so he has ultimate power and wipe out half of all living beings in the universe – with just a snap of his fingers. He is one powerful bad guy.

And as Marvel continues to make movies after End Game – I have no doubt that we will see even more powerful characters being introduced into the storyline.

Now I'm making reference to the Marvel Cinematic universe for two reasons, first – and mostly for our young people, if you can keep track of the Marvel story lines and characters and how it all works together, you are perfectly capable of following along as we learn all these amazing things about who God is.

Secondly – it's a great way to get us thinking about the levels of power that beings can possess; there's the ordinary bad guy, next up is the evil genius, after that we have the dark sorcerer with magic power, level up next to the immortal dark elves

with their powerful aether, and finally there's Thanos and his infinity stones... so powerful you can barely stand against him.

It's helpful to have us start to imagine just how powerful someone could be so that we can prepare ourselves to begin to grapple with how powerful God truly is, because God isn't just more powerful than the most powerful being we can imagine... God is actually ALL powerful, He is omnipotent. That is why He is called the ALL-Mighty.

Now we have to acknowledge that if people had to choose one of God's attributes as their favorite, His omnipotence would be a top contender and because as human beings we admire power and our hearts desire it – I believe that's why superhero movies are so popular...

JRR Tolkien had great insight into the human heart on this matter when he wrote the Lord of the Rings and penned this line about the creation of the twenty rings of power. *“Three were given to the Elves; immortal, wisest and fairest of all beings. Seven, to the Dwarf Lords, great miners and craftsmen*

of the mountain halls. And nine, nine rings were gifted to the race of Men, who above all else desire power.” And what else do we say about those who obtain power? “Power corrupts... and absolute power corrupts absolutely!”

So, its entirely possible that we might be very enthusiastic to learn about God’s omnipotence this morning because we just love power and anyone who all powerful is attractive to us for that reason – in same way that certain democratically elected politicians admire dictators who are able to do whatever they want with their countries. So God can be attractive to us simply because He’s got power.

Now, humanity has long had a level of awareness that divine power exists and has always looked for a way to harness it, tap into it, for our own benefit – you could argue that this is what is responsible for the development of religion and spiritualism, and it tells us a lot about our sinful nature as well. So, before we take a closer look at God’s omnipotence this morning, let’s allow the scripture passage from Ephesians 1 to set the context for us and guide us.

What we read from Eph 1:15-23 this morning is Paul’s prayer for the believers in Ephesus, and every believer that reads this letter – including us – with regards to his desire that he expresses in vs. 17 that we would know God better.

And the means to know God better which Paul is requesting, is that God gives us The Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation. Paul is asking that God direct His Holy Spirit to reveal to us who God is and that the Holy Spirit imparts these facts and information about God not for the sake of curiosity, not in a way that appeals to our sinful nature, but for the purpose of wisdom.

Remember last week we learned that wisdom is using knowledge for a higher and nobler purpose. So, what we learn about God and His power this morning is not for our own benefit and advantage, rather the Holy Spirit will also teach us to be wise with this knowledge so that we use it for God’s glory – first by praising God for who He is, secondly by blessing others in telling them about God.

So may God indeed give us His Spirit of Revelation and Wisdom as we consider His omnipotence this morning brothers and sisters – Amen!?

Now the reason Paul is praying that we come to know more about God is that it shifts our focus away from ourselves and on to God – how can it not as we see how awesome God is in comparison to ourselves. We become far less self-centered and much more God centered, and being God centered is being Godly isn't it – which is what God wants for us.

Additionally, there are difficult truths about God that we must face, not just difficult in how its hard to comprehend that God can predetermine everything but that predetermination is the foundation which makes us able to respond, have agency and influence and develop His creation – that's mind bending... but difficult in that there are truths about God which confront and reveal the depths of our hidden human sinfulness.

So, its important that we grow in our knowledge of God, and contemplate it and focus on it because when we have done

this for a while we are prepared us to face those difficult truths about God and come to terms with them. They are not as difficult because we're not so self focused and we're captivated by the awesomeness of God instead. That's why we don't start off with learning about God's wrath and His anger – we need to be prepared to learn about that and face the truth about it and then we will be blessed by it, and so too with God's power.

So, let's allow this scripture passage to prepare us to. Let's look at vs 18 where Paul prays that we would be enlightened to know the hope to which God has called us, then in vs. 19 we learn this is a twofold hope. First, we have hope in the inheritance which God gives us and secondly, pertaining to our focus today, our hope is God's incomparable great power.

So, now we are ready to learn about God's power and the Holy Spirit can answer the Apostle Paul's prayer for us this morning, and we can learn how God's power is our hope.

Thus far, we've grown in our knowledge of God in learning that He is self-existing and He is uncreatedly-infinite. So, as we now begin to reflect on His power, we can say that God has within Himself whatever energy and power is needed to be self-existing in an infinite way and also whatever power is needed to call into being everything that has been created in order to exist and can continue to exist. This the starting point of what it means that God has All power, that He is omnipotent.

And we can also say that ALL power comes from God, there isn't anything outside of God from which He draws His power – like infinity stones or the a ring... God's Omnipotence means that He Himself is the ultimate source of all power.

So, let's toss this around in our minds a bit... just to amaze ourselves at how awesome God is.

Let's consider what we learned about God's knowledge last week as we tried to wrap our minds around God knowing ALL that He can know about Himself and ALL the things that are

possibilities because of who God is in Himself. That's an infinite amount of knowledge isn't it... an infinite number of possibilities and ideas and decisions and courses of actions and plans that God could act upon. Mind blowing isn't it...

Even if we just focused on considering all the possibilities of how things could be different in this world... for example; the sky could be green, animals could have been made to speak, we could have had seven fingers on our hands and three toes on our feet or our toes could have been our fingers and our feet could be our hands...

We could have been created to drink oil instead of water, babies would need loud sounds to lull them to sleep, two plus two could have equaled five - and the Edmonton fans could cheer for the Calgary Flames... It would still blow our minds!

It's impossible to wrap our minds around ALL of the other possibilities and different modes of existence for God outside the reality that we know – all of the weird comic book multi-

verse possibilities that we see in the Marvel movies don't even come close to scratching the surface of it.

And here's the kicker brothers and sisters, God's power... is capable of accomplishing it ALL. He could do it ALL and then some more. Isn't that amazing!!

To put this into comparison think about the smattering of ideas and plans floating around in our minds that we'd like to accomplish in our lives; Home renos, business expansions, record a song, create some art, rally people to a cause. We can find it challenging and difficult just to bring a couple of our ideas into reality and after we manage to do - we're spent!

But God... God is capable of accomplishing an infinite number of potentials and possibilities and plans for realities and He could do it without even breaking a sweat, and do even more than that – as He himself says in Jeramiah 32:27 *"I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"* God is ALL powerful, He is omnipotent.

So now that we've allowed ourselves to be amazed by God's power to accomplish all sorts of possibilities, let's allow ourselves to marvel – at what He has actually chosen to bring about and how we bear witness to God's power in the creation, in His providence and especially in the redemption of sinners.

Scripture is chock full of references which reveal that it is indeed the Creational power of God on display whenever we witness the power and energy of the natural world.

The entire chapters of Job 38-39 is about God causing the natural world to function through His power, even the stars in the far reaches of the universe. Vs. 31-32 asks *"Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades? Can you loosen Orion's belt? Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons, or lead out the Bear with its cubs?"* God's power moves stars!

And Psalm 68:32 which we read this morning references God's power in a storm travelling across the sky when it says *"to him*

who rides across the highest heavens, the ancient heavens, who thunders with mighty voice.”

And The entirety of Psalm 29 is about acknowledging it is God’s great power in the wind and the rain and the thunder and the lighting of a great storm, its not some other god - like Baal.

Its important that we realize its God’s power on display when we witness a supernova, when we see a volcano, when we experience an earthquake or blizzard or a tornado or some other powerful natural phenomena. Obviously, its not the work of some god of thunder and lightning (sorry Thor) but neither is it simply the laws of nature or applied physics at work – it’s the very creation responding to the All-powerful Word of God that says exist! Be!

This is of course why Jesus Christ as the Word made flesh can simply speak *“Quiet! Be still!”* and the storm that was raging over the sea of Galilee stops and everything became completely calm. (Mark 4:39)

And this is also why, contrary to much misunderstanding out there, proper science does not conflict with the Christian faith but is yet another way to grow in our appreciation of God with the Spirit of Revelation and Wisdom guiding us as we observe and study and understand why God’s power works the way it does within His creation. God is Omnipotent.

And scripture is chock full of examples of how God uses His power to provide, what we often will call providence. Starting with Job 38 again in vs. 38 and 41 where God asks Job *“Do you hunt the prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of the lions when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in a thicket? Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God...”* The answer is of course is that God does.

Psalm 65:9 is another example and it builds on this, recognizing that our farming efforts also depend on God’s power. *“You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain.”* And further in vs. 13 *“The*

meadows are covered with flocks and the valleys are mantled with grain; they shout for joy and sing.”

And of course, there are the instances of God’s miraculous providence that we read about in the scripture; Exodus 16 describes the mana God sent every morning to feed the Israel as they wandered through the desert, and 1 Kings 17 tells how God used the ravens to bring the prophet Elijah food, and the story of the nearly empty jar of oil and flour that never ran out while Elijah stayed with the widow of Zarephath.

These are just some of the examples in scripture of God’s power in His providence supplying what is needed for our life and the good and orderly running of this world.

Additionally brothers and sisters, what we witness in God’s providence speaks to the perfection of God’s power – while we are easily corrupted by power and tend to use it for our own interests and advantage, this is not the case with God. As Jesus himself points out in Matt 5:45 God *“causes his sun to*

rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

God is not capricious or manipulative or abusive with His power - His providence proves it. God is omnipotent.

And finally we witness and experience God’s power at work in the redemption of sinners, and scripture isn’t just chock full of examples about this – it’s the underlying story of the scripture, it’s the purpose of scripture as 2 Timothy 3:15 attests – to make us wise for salvation in Jesus Christ, right from the start!

Think of God’s power at work in undoing His created order to bring about the flood and sparing Noah and His family from it... (Gen 6) Think of God’s power which brought forth life from a dry womb and aged loins to fulfil His promise that Abraham and Sara would have son... (Gen 21)

Think of God’s power which transformed events and circumstances which Joseph’s brothers intended for harm into something that ended up preserving their lives from famine...

(Gen 37) Think of God's power in the mighty acts by which He delivered the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt and brought them through the Red Sea and gave them the promised land... (Ex 5 ff) Think of God's power by which King David defeated the Philistines and other nations and brought peace to Israel from her enemies (1 Kings 5:4)

Think of God's power by which the Holy Spirit conceived the Word in Mary's womb so that God became flesh in Jesus Christ... (Luke 1:35) Think of God's power by which the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus Christ to heal the sick, make the blind see, have the lame walk, and raise the dead... (Matt, Mark, Luke John) Think of God's power by which Jesus Christ endured becoming sin for our sake, bore the full weight of the punishment for sin on the cross, and defeated death itself in His resurrection from the grave! (Matt, Mark, Luke, John)

And continue to think.... Of God's power which Jesus promised to cloth his disciples with when He instructed them to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit...

Of God's power by which the Holy Spirit transformed the disciples into witnesses who boldly called people to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ... Of God's power by which the Holy Spirit did miracles and signs and wonders through the apostles to accompany the preaching of the gospel of Jesus... Of God's power by which Jesus himself confronted the murderous Saul and changed him into the Apostle Paul.

Of God's power by which the Holy Spirit has convicted you and I of our sin, and enabled us to believe in Jesus as our savior, and thus grafted into God's people to receive that inheritance of which Paul is praying in Eph 1:18 that we know as our hope!

Brothers and sisters God's power is our hope because it is the means by which we are saved, and we have also seen it accomplish in Jesus what God promises to accomplish for us. Paul writes in Eph 1:19-20 *"That power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms..."*

What God's power has done for Christ He will do for us – we can count on it; it is our Hope. God is Omnipotent!
So brothers and sisters, if you are enthusiastic about God's power and His omnipotence in light of all that we have just learned... good, that is good.

Because God's power is the means by which God accomplishes what He has planned to do – and that has a lot to do with what He is doing in our lives. God's power is the reason why His other attributes are effective. Why does God's love never give up? Because of His Power! Why does God's grace never run out? Because of His Power! What can God do what He does? He has ALL Power.

So, brothers and sisters, embrace God's omnipotence because it is the means by which God will bring about His will for your life, and we do not want to be like those in 2 Timothy 3:5 who have a form of godliness... but who deny its power.

It is offensive to God brothers and sisters to be godly but to deny His power in our lives. After you have learned about His omnipotence, I trust you can understand this.

Instead let us believe and trust as Romans 8:28 that God's power makes it possible for Him to work in ALL things for our good, to bring His irresistible power into our lives in His good timing so that as Jesus himself says in Mark 10:27 *"All things are possible with God"*

Brothers and sisters, all things are possible... so that means; Whatever needs to happen in your life to bring your sanctification to completion – is possible! Whatever God calls you to obey, His laws, to trust Him, to not fear, turn from sin – is possible! Whatever sacrifice needs to be made or suffering needs to be endured – is possible!

Whomever you need to forgive and make things right with – is possible! Whatever resources are needed for the work God has given you - is possible!

Whatever motivation is required whatever conviction is needed for us to Go OUT – is possible!

And Whatever words we need to talk to people about God, Whatever courage we need to get past our fear... to become bold... Is possible!

And because all things are possible with God, and because we have grown in knowing who God is in His Omnipotence – we can proclaim along with the Apostle Paul in Philippians 4:13 *“I can do all these things through Christ who strengthens me!”*

So then brothers and sisters – go and do all these things because the truth is *“The Kingdom of God is not a matter of talk! But of power!”* (1 Cor 4:20)

God... is Omnipotent! Amen.