
The Writer's Inkhorn

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Continuing Reflections on the Word for Your Personal Growth in Christ

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You Have the Power to Stand

Background Scripture: Acts 4-5

In this issue of the *Writer's Inkhorn*, I focus on the power that we have been granted to accomplish whatever God commands us to do. The Scripture text I have chosen to work from is the 5th chapter of Acts. I hope you will take the time to read the entire chapter at your earliest convenience. There are a number of stories throughout that chapter that I will use to draw out some things that God shared with me about this text.

To give a little background, think about the newly formed Christian church after Christ has returned to heaven. In chapter 2 of this second book of Luke, the Acts, we have the record of what happened on the day of **Pentecost**, the 50th day after Easter (penta – a word-forming element meaning five). Some of you who are reading this issue probably know the first few verses of the text by heart; but for others of you who do not, I am including it here:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other



tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

It is after this momentous occurrence on Pentecost that Peter preached his first sermon. People were pricked in their hearts, and 3,000 were saved. Then came the first apostolic miracle when Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer and healed the lame man that was being placed at the Gate Beautiful, daily. The infirmed man had been lame since birth and he was now over 40 years old.

This incredible miracle caused such a stir that it provided an opportunity for Peter to give his second sermon. And scripture says that this time about 5,000 men heard the word and believed. And that, my friends, is when the persecutions began. The early church was a persecuted church, and when persecution comes, it has a tendency to bring the saints to their knees. Amen?! But when you get up, the Holy Ghost will give you **the power to stand**. This is what happened to the apostles.

The Sadducees and the Sanhedrin Court threatened the apostles because they preached the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. (Incidentally, the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. So, it makes you wonder why they were aligned with the Sanhedrin over this matter of Jesus' resurrection if they did not believe in that doctrine, *anyway*. Go figure!)

So those religious officials put the apostles in custody overnight and warned them to stop preaching in the name of Jesus. But when the apostles were released the next day, they went

right back to doing what Christ had commissioned them to do. The Holy Ghost gave them **the power to stand** against the rulers without fear, and preach Christ. Listen, when you have a commandment from God, you need to recognize that the power to do what God has commanded you to do is in the word as it proceeds from God's mouth.

Whatever He tells you to do, **the power** to do it is in the word as it proceeds from His mouth. I don't want you to miss this. God revealed this to me. When God gives His word, the **power** to **accomplish** that thing **is in the word** that He gives at the instant that word proceeds from His mouth. There is much evidence in Scripture to verify this. When God said let there be light, what happened? Exactly! There **was** light. Did you catch that? **Light** was created in the moment that God said "let there be." The world and the worlds were created, **in the moment**, by the **word** of God as He **spoke** those things into existence. Whether that word is something for **you** to do or something for **God** to do on your behalf, there is no time lapse since the **power** is already **in the word** as it leaves the mouth of God. Hear these words through the prophet, Isaiah:

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not thither, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. (Isaiah 55:10-11)

You have **the power to stand** and do whatever God commands **you** to do. So the apostles continued the work of the ministry with holy boldness, and the people were so

stirred with a spirit of oneness and togetherness, that they began to voluntarily sell their possessions and bring their goods to the apostles to be redistributed for the good of all, so that none would have lack. When the word of God is being preached under the anointing and with power and people are experiencing the move of God in and upon their lives, they will gladly support the work of the ministry, that is, those whose hearts are in the right place. There will be no need to **beg** for their support. We can simply *ask* if something is needed for the ministry.

And that brings us to the first people we encounter in this 5th chapter of Acts, a couple named Ananias and Sapphira. These two people lied to the Holy Ghost by way of the apostles about what they received from the sale of some property. As a leader, the Holy Ghost will give you discernment, and the power to stand against people who have deceiving spirits.

Let us be clear about what is at issue, here: holding back part of the proceeds was **not** the problem. The **lies** about the proceeds are what got them in trouble. The property was theirs to do with as they wished. The **lies** are what get **us** in trouble, too. There are people in our midst who want to *appear* as though they are giving God their best, but they conspire with their spouses, with their families, or in their own hearts to hold back, to not give their best, but be warned of what can happen to you **and** your substance.

Even if or when your spouse or family disagree, you do not have to convince them; **you** just have to do what is right by God, by His church and by *His* people. God expects for us to be good stewards of that which He has placed in our hands since it ALL belongs to Him anyway.

I noticed an interesting thing is going on, here. God's **power** was manifest in two very

different ways in *this* story. There was power in the word of the apostles that called out the **deception** that was in the minds of the couple – a conspired deception that led to their *immediate* demise. And, there was power that was evident in the lives of the apostles for the **working of miracles** and for ministering to the people and their needs (see verses 12-16). The power of God works to accomplish God's will, either to our **detriment** when we are **disobedient**, dishonest or behave immorally, or to our **benefit** when we are **obedient** sons and daughters. God reserves the power to deal with us as is befitting us individually.

Next, we encounter a record of the second persecution, the apostles are **imprisoned**, but the amazing thing is that we see the power of God over what happens in that situation as well. **[Read verses 17-21a.]**

¹⁷ Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, ¹⁸ And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. ¹⁹ But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, ²⁰ Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. ²¹ And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught.

The apostles were put in prison but God sent an angel *by night* to open the prison doors and bring them forth. There will be those who will – because you are doing the work of the Lord, helping people, getting some recognition for what you're doing, or whatever – attempt to stop you. But however secure it may appear, **no prison can hold you if God sets you free** - - no prison of past failures, of family history, of poverty, or circumstances, or sickness, or of lack of appropriate education. When **God** sends His angels to let you out, you can walk

boldly out, without fear! And, get this, He doesn't even have to open the physical doors that everyone else sees! **[Read verses 21b-24.]**

But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. ²² But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned and told, ²³ Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. ²⁴ Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

Did you catch that? The apostles were delivered from prison **while** the guards were posted outside the door and the doors were left locked! Awesome God! Yes, the devil has keepers -- those who will try to keep you down, and who will say in so many words "You *can't be* or *do* that?" But when they realize anything, with the help of God, you will have slipped from under their control, and will have risen above their petty oppositions, and will leave them perplexed and scratching their heads trying to figure how you managed to escape their hatred and attempted hindrances and roadblocks. **You** will know that **God** did it!

[Read verses 25-29.]

²⁵ Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. ²⁶ Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they

should have been stoned. ²⁷ *And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,* ²⁸ *Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.* ²⁹ *Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.*

Here, then, is the crux of the matter: the answer of the apostles in verse 29: “*We ought to obey God rather than men.*” When **I** understand, when **you** understand your **purpose** is to *obey God* rather than obey, listen to, allow ourselves to be hindered or stopped by men, then we will start to realize that **the power of God within us** is power over **any people** and **all prisons** that will try to hold us back. When my **purpose** is clear in my **own** mind, then I further realize that I am undergirded *at all times* by God's **promises**.

Look at verses 31, 32, and 39: there is (a) the promise of a Savior, (b) the promise of the Holy Spirit who will walk along side, and (c) the promise that if our work is of God, **no one**, and I repeat, **no one** will be able to overthrow it / to stand against you, or **it will be as if they are picking a fight with God, Himself!** Proceed! **Stand** in your **power**. God has given you the power to stand. Hear the many witnesses in His word:

Stand ye still and see the salvation of the Lord with you...

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

God is able to make you **stand**...

Watch, **stand** fast in the faith...be strong.

Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free.

When you have done all, to stand; **stand** therefore...

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **stand** against the schemes of the devil. (ESV)

So then, brothers [and sisters], **stand** firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught... (ESV)

Feel free to continue to do your *own* search. From one end of the Bible to the other, God's word admonishes us over and over and over, through various writers, or multiple times through the *same* writer (the Apostle Paul, in particular), to stand firm in our faith. God's word reminds us that **we have the power to stand** because God said to do so, and His word does not tell us to do anything that we are unable *to* do.

This same word is our weapon against the enemy. It is the weapon Jesus used when He was led into the wilderness and tempted by Satan. With each temptation, He responded back with God's word. We would be wise to do likewise, but we must **study** God's word to know it and recall it when we need to ward off Satan's attacks and strengthen our resolve.

This is the word of the Lord to you, His people. **Realize** His promises are sure; **know** your purpose, **walk out** of your prisons, **use** His power, and **bless** His people.

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