

Ephesians 1:15-23 | “No Power Shortages”  
*Preached on April 17, 2022 by Pastor Matt Brown*

Please turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 1, verse 15. *[pause]*

We come together this morning to celebrate and remember Christ's resurrection, as it's one of the most important events in the world.

It's one of our foundational beliefs, and as we will see this morning, it's truly *powerful*. *[pauseee]*

Back in the summer of 2020, California had a problem - a power problem.

Because of various factors, the state had to go through blackouts because of their power shortage.

Then in the early months of 2021, Texas faced its own power shortage situation when extreme cold hit the area. *[pause]*

Those states experienced power shortages, and I'm sure it wasn't fun because power shortages limit your ability to do things.

No one likes a power shortage. *[pause]*

Californians couldn't keep cool in the blazing heat because of their blackouts, and Texans couldn't stay warm in theirs.

Many people weren't able to cook food or do essential things that we often take for granted.

Power shortages hinder your ability to function well. *[pauseeee]*

And I wonder this: I wonder how many Christians live with a power shortage in their Christian walk.

I'm sure many, because we have probably lived that way at least here and there.

But why?!

Why do so many Christians live defeated?

Why do they live so powerless?

Why do Christians live enslaved to sins, feeling incapable of getting out?

Why do Christians live feeling like they lack the power to evangelize, persevere, or serve?

Where is God's mighty power?! *[pauseeee]*

I believe that one of the main problems is that we forget about and neglect the power of God. *[pause]*

Just think about the times that you worry.

Isn't that evidence that you lack confidence in the power of God?

You're looking to the future, realizing that there's a lot that you can't control, and then you despair. *[pause]*

Or maybe you are facing a hard temptation.

What makes you feel so like you can't resist it and what makes you feel hopeless against the power of it?

Isn't it because you are looking inward for power, and underestimating the power of God? *[pauseeee]*

In our passage this morning, Paul will show us that really there's no power shortage for a Christian because of what we have in God.

And through this passage, you'll see how it's connected to the resurrection of Christ.

Let's READ THE PASSAGE. *[read 1:15-23]*

Ephesians 1 is a powerful chapter.

In verse 3-14, Paul has explained all of the amazing spiritual blessings that we have in Christ.

But now as he gets to verse 15, it's like, as he dwells upon all of these blessings, he can't help but remember that his readers need prayer to know the depth of these blessings.

And so Paul says that he remembers them in his prayers, gives thanks to God for them, and he prays for some specific things. *[pause]*

Starting in verse 18 and into verse 19, Paul prays for them to know 3 things.

He prays that they know the hope they have, the riches of their inheritance, and the one that I want to focus on this morning is in verse 19...

To know... "what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe."

*And so that's the main point for us today...*

➤ **Know the greatness of God's power towards you.**

It's one thing to know something, it's another to truly *know* something. *[pause]*

Let's use white water rafting as an illustration.

It's one thing to look at the rapids from the shore, and to know that the rapids are powerful.

But it's another to get into a raft, and actually go through the rapids.

For when you actually go through the rapids, you feel and experience the power of the rapids, and now you are truly knowing the power of the rapids intimately. *[pause]*

That's what Paul is wanting for us this morning as we read what he says.

He doesn't just want us to know the power of God from a distance, and say, "Yes, God is powerful."

But he wants us to truly, deeply, and intimately know the greatness of God's power towards us. *[pause]*

His power is not to be simply a trivia answer to be known, written down, and moved on from.

His power is something that Paul wants us to grasp, appreciate, utilize, and know deeply. *[pauseeee]*

Do you see how he phrases this?

He phrases it in such a way as to show us that God's power is already working towards us, but that we must grasp it. *[pause]*

This goes along with what he was just saying...

**We have already been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ!**

So we must know the resources we have in Christ, for we already possess them. *[pauseeee]*

"Warren Wiersbe tells of the late, wealthy newspaper publisher, William Randolph Hearst.

He spent a fortune collecting art treasures from around the world.

One day he found a description of some valuable items that he felt he must own. So he sent his agent abroad to search for them.

After months of searching, the agent reported that he had finally found the treasures. They were already in Mr. Hearst's warehouse.

**Hearst had been searching for treasures that he already owned!"<sup>1</sup> *[pause]***

Christian, you have so many blessings and resources in Christ, but will you truly know and utilize them? *[pause]*

We are like that wealthy man, searching all over for what we already have.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Steven J. Cole. Found at:  
<https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-11-god%E2%80%99s-mighty-power-ephesians-119-23>.

We feel inadequate when we face the power of sin and we feel like we can't overcome temptation.

We don't know if we can be effective in ministry or useful for the Lord.

We don't think that we can make it through future trials.

And Paul is saying, "Hello?! Know the power of God towards you!" *[pauseeee]*

God harnesses His power for our benefit!

It is "for those who believe." *[pause]*

So this power isn't just for anyone off the street, but it's for those who believe in Jesus Christ.

If you have never turned from your sins and trusted in Jesus Christ to save you, His power *isn't* available to you.

Just look at what you're missing!

Yet here's the good news - it can be. *[pause]*

I pray that God would help you to see the great need to turn to Christ to be saved.

And then once you are saved, just look at all the spiritual blessings given to you.

You can know the power of God toward you in taking you from death to life, and you can know His power for the rest of your life. *[pauseeee]*

Getting back to the text, we saw that God's power is towards those who believe.

We already possess it, but we need to grasp it.

And what's something we need to grasp? The immeasurable greatness of His power. *[pause]*

Paul doesn't just say, "Know God's power," but he emphasizes God's power so much so that he just keeps adding words. *[pause]*

It's not just the greatness of His power, but the *immeasurable* greatness of His power. *[pause]*

So he wants us to know the magnitude of His power.

And not just the magnitude of His power, but the fact that it is immeasurable greatness.

It is a power that is far greater than any power you could think of, for it surpasses all the rest. *[pauseeee]*

His power is like a dynamite, for the Greek word used here is where we get our word for "dynamite."

And then he adds three more “power” words, and the King James gets this across, as it says, “according to the working of his mighty power.”

It's like Paul was looking for every possible word for power that he could find to try to convey the power of God to us. *[pauseeee]*

Oh, how often we underestimate the power of God!

Paul was reaching for superlatives and every word that conveys power to try to get us to truly know His power towards us.

And yet we think, “I don't know if I can do this thing that God has called me to.”

Paul would say, “What!? Don't you know the immeasurable greatness of His power towards you?!?” *[pauseeee]*

Know the greatness of His power.

He doesn't say to know the greatness of *your* power, which many in our world would try to trumpet.

No, know the greatness of *His* power.

That's why Paul says in 2 Corinthians that God's power is made perfect in our weaknesses.<sup>2</sup> *[pauseeee]*

So often we get way too focused on our strength, or lack thereof.

And God is showing us this morning, “Look at *My* strength.” *[pauseeee]*

The truth is, we are weak. The world can't give us power. Just some positive thoughts won't supply the needed power.

And after looking to those things, we continually realize that they might produce short spurts of a little power, but eventually they short out.

And we are looking to so many of those dead sources of power when we have an endless supply of power available in Christ! *[pauseeee]*

We have such a small view of God's power that we are barely tapping into it.

Many of us are scuba diving in the kiddie pool of God's power when there are endless ocean depths to be experienced! *[pause]*

Know the greatness of God's power towards you.

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<sup>2</sup> See 2 Corinthians 12:9.

*But how? Well the context of this verse tells us, as it shows you that you need to....*

**A. Look to God to help you know His great power towards you.**

You see, knowing the greatness of His power is not just something that we can know on our own.

*We can't grasp the depths of His power by just thinking hard enough.*

We can't truly understand and discern His power towards us in that way.

*Instead, you need God's help to know the greatness of His power. [pause]*

Look back up at verse 17.

*Paul prays for them "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know..."*

Know what? Those three things, and especially the one we were talking about - "what is the immeasurable greatness of His power." *[pauseeee]*

*Paul is showing us that to know His power deeper, God must do a work of helping us to see it.*

This is clear throughout Scripture, particularly in a passage like 1 Corinthians 2, which tells us, "the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God."

*And it says, "We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God."<sup>3</sup> [pauseeee]*

We need God "the Father of glory" to give us wisdom and understanding.

*We need Him to give us deeper insight into His power.*

And this isn't some new, special knowledge, but really, it's a deeper knowledge of Him. *[pause]*

*Did you see how he wishes that God "may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him." [pause]*

Some Christians are seeking some new special revelation, some new experience of second blessing...

*...And Paul is simply saying, "No, you need God to help you to know Him deeper, so that you may know the amazing blessings already given to you!" [pause]*

He enlightens the eyes of our heart to see the depths of His person and work. *[pauseeee]*

*Paul's not asking that we simply know more facts, but that we would truly know Him more.*

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:10,12 (Italics is mine).

We need God to help us to see Him for who He is. *[pause]*

This intimate, deep knowledge of God is not just available to some select few Christian elites.

It's not just available to those who claim they had a vision or second blessing.

This knowledge is available to all Christians, who would simply pray to God to help them.  
*[pauseeee]*

How often do we actually pray this way for ourselves or for others?

How often do we pray to God to help us to know Him more, to help us to understand and grasp His power? *[pause]*

What we see from this passage is that the more I know Him, the more I'll know His power!

But I need to be praying to God to help me to see it, to appreciate it, to know it, to grasp it and what it means for my life. *[pauseeee]*

I want you to just pause right now, and do a short prayer in your heart to God, asking Him to help you to know Him more.

You could say something like, "Lord, I need you right now. I need you to help me to know You more and to know your power towards me. Give me wisdom and insight into this today."

Take a moment right now and do that because we are dependent on Him to know His power towards us. *[PAUSEEEEEEE]*

Paul is showing us that our faith isn't just something where we go through the motions.

It's not something that we just check boxes and say, "OK, I went to the Easter service. I'm good."

It's not something where we say, "OK, I did communion and was friendly to people, now I'm good."

No, it's a living, active, growing relationship with God, where we are getting to know Him more and more.

The most important thing when it comes to your walk with the Lord is a growing knowledge of Him.

It's truly about knowing God, and when we know God, we can know the greatness of His power towards us, and this transforms our lives. *[pauseeee]*

Look to God to help you know the greatness of His power towards you.

You need Him to help you understand, grasp, and discern His mighty power at work on your behalf.

Pray to Him often, asking Him to help you grasp His immense power that is available to you. *[pauseeee]*

*So in order to know the greatness of His power towards us, we need to look to God in prayer, but we also need to...*

### **B. Look at God's amazing demonstration of his power in Christ!**

Sometimes thinking about an example of how powerful something is can help us grasp the magnitude of it. *[pause]*

Think of it this way...

Let's say that someone claimed that they were super strong physically.

You've never really seen them do something strong, so it's harder for you to understand how truly strong they are.

So what's helpful? *[pause]*

One way is to tell you about ways in which they proved their strength in the past.

They could walk you over to their "world's strongest man" trophies and say, "Look, I won this one last year and this one year the before."

They will say, "I lifted this much weight in order to win that competition."

Their amazing demonstrations in the past help you to grasp how truly strong they are. *[pauseeee]*

So in a way, Paul is somewhat doing that for us when it comes to God's strength.

He's reminding us of how God has manifested His strength in Christ. *[pause]*

This is helpful for us because it reminds us that God's power is not some abstract idea, but His power has been manifested in clear, compelling ways.

His power is "according to the *working* of the great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead." *[pause]*

God has exercised His power in Jesus' resurrection.

This is what we celebrate and remember today!

God has shown off his power in history by raising Christ from the dead. *[pause]*

If God through Christ can conquer death, then what great power He has!



If you ever forget about the power of God, just remember the resurrection, for what a significant demonstration of power!

Christ died, but then 3 days later rose again!

God's strong arm was on display, as He raised Christ from the dead, showing us, "Look at what I can do! Even death is not powerful enough." [pauseeee]

As we look around us, we see the power of death, as no one is exempt from death's grip when it comes to our physical lives.

The strongest of men in the world can die from sickness.

The strongest woman in the world can't escape death's power.

Yet God showed us in the resurrection that death's power is deemed to be nothing when He works His might, for He conquered death.

He didn't just bring Christ to life and then Christ die again, but rather, Christ was raised to a new mode of existence, where death won't ever touch his body again.

And that's the promise that we have, too!

Listen to Romans 8:11, "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you." [pauseeee]

Whenever you think of the resurrection of Jesus, you can think of the power of God.

Whenever you remember that Christ is alive today, you can remember the kind of power of God that's available to you now.

That very same power at work in Christ's resurrection is the power that God works towards us who believe! [pause]

And yet we live thinking we don't have enough power.

And yet we live thinking that God's power is insufficient, and that we must supplement it with something else. [pauseeeeeeee]

Not only has His power been displayed in Christ's resurrection, but also in Christ's exaltation. [pause]

Paul says that God "seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come." [pause]

God's power has seated Christ in the place of honor and authority, above all other authorities.

Those “authority” terms used typically speak of the evil spiritual forces that are behind the evil earthly kingdoms and people in our world.

But really, any authority that you can think of is below Christ. *[pause]*

You want to know the extent of Christ’s authority and power? It is *far above* any kind of authority or power that you can think of - they don’t even come close. *[pause]*

So that’s the *extent* of His authority - above every name, but what about the *duration* of His authority?

Is it just like a temporary, 4 year term or something?

Nope. He’s above every power in this age and in the one to come.

He is the King and will always be King, for His kingdom has no end. *[pauseeee]*

What power of God!

He has seated and exalted Jesus above every enemy, above every ruler, above everyone - and He has “put all things under his feet.” *[pause]*

Though the subjection of all authorities under Christ is not always evident right now, they are subjected to Christ nonetheless.

Their subjection is seen anytime that a sinner is snatched out of Satan’s grasp and redeemed...

...Anytime that we utilize His power to resist the Devil, and anytime that we choose to live for Him although the world is telling us to go the opposite way.

And the full realization of their subjection will be manifest clearly in the future. *[pauseeee]*

Do you worry about the power of the evil spiritual forces at work in the world?

Do you worry about the power of the media, the power of the government, or the power of an individual?

Don’t fret because Christ is above them all - God’s power has placed Him there, and they are placed under His feet. *[pause]*

This is why we aren’t lacking any power when it comes to going to battle against spiritual forces, for we have the Christ-exalting power of God at work in us.

Before saying to put on the armor of God against these very forces, Paul says, “be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.”<sup>4</sup> *[pause]*

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<sup>4</sup> Ephesians 6:10.

We have the power needed to defend ourselves against the onslaught of Satan's schemes because the power at work in us is God's very resurrection power.

So we don't fear them! We don't tremble in our boots!

For we have the immeasurable power of God available to us! *[pauseeee]*

People wonder, "I don't know if I can go up against Satan. I don't know if I'm powerful enough."

And God is saying, "You're not in yourself, but you have My power, and with My power, you can resist the Devil and He will flee from you."<sup>5</sup> *[pauseeee]*

So God's power was demonstrated in Christ's resurrection and exaltation.

He was raised and seated in the heavenly places with all things under his feet, and this Christ, God gave as head over the church. *[pause]*

The One who has all authority and power was given to us, the church.

Just think of this: the highest authority over the universe is given to us, and He focuses on leading, caring, protecting, and interceding for us.

The One over the universe was given to us, the church, for our benefit.

So this means that since we are His body, then we get to participate in that power and authority. *[pause]*

Just listen to what commentator Darrell Bock says...

"Through Christ the church has everything it needs from God to be what it is called to be.

Victory over these hostile forces will not only come one day; it is possible now, whatever they throw the church's way, provided the church draws on the enablement Christ gives."<sup>6</sup> *[pauseeee]*

The power of God was demonstrated in Christ's resurrection and exaltation.

His power conquered both death and evil, and if He can conquer those two things, then what can His power not do?

*Christian...*

**You have access to the same great power that raised and exalted Christ above all! *[pause]***

Know the immeasurable greatness of His power!

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<sup>5</sup> An allusion to James 4:7.

<sup>6</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, ed. Eckhard J. Schnabel, vol. 10, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2019), 59.

Any time that you are doubting the power of God, just remember the resurrection and exaltation of Christ.

Remember His past acts of power, but also pray that God would help you to understand it.  
[pauseeee]

Maybe you're here this morning as a Christian, and you say, "How has that power been displayed in my life? I don't think I've seen it."

Well I want you to look at what Paul says right after talking about this power.

Look at Ephesians 2:5, He's talking about what God did and he says, "even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ."

And then a little farther down, he talks about how we had no hope, yet God (through Christ) has broken down the wall of hostility and brought us near.<sup>7</sup> [pause]

You want to know what power has been displayed in your life?

You were alienated from God, but then reconciled to Him!

You were spiritually dead and then He made you alive!

Now that's power! [pause]

A dead person can't do anything - you had no capability of rescuing yourself and no hope as you were separated from God.

BUT GOD - He has the power to make what is dead to be alive, and He showed off His power in your life!

So don't act like God hasn't used His power in your life, for He did a miracle! [pauseeee]

And if you are here today and you have never trusted in Jesus Christ alone to save you, you too are separated from God because of your sin and you are dead spiritually, bound for eternal condemnation.

But the good news is that God has the power to save, forgive, and transform! [pause]

We each have sinned against God, and we deserve eternal punishment because of that sin.

Yet God sent Jesus Christ (His Son) to come to this earth, live a perfect life, and die on the Cross, taking the penalty that we deserved.

Because of His substitutionary sacrifice in our place, our sins before God are dealt with and we are given eternal life to live with God.

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<sup>7</sup> See Ephesians 2:12-14.

But to receive this gift, you must turn away from that sin and turn to Christ as your only hope to be saved.

Today can be the day of salvation for you.

You can experience the power of God to make you alive, forgive you, bring you near, and give you a home in Heaven with Him. *[pauseee]*

So as a Christian, you might say, “OK, you have proved that God’s power was at work in my life in salvation, but what about now? Do I really have access to His power?”

Definitely.

His power keeps us, preserves our eternal life, and will someday give us resurrected bodies!

His power gives us the power to say “No,” to temptation and also to endure suffering righteously!

His power gives us boldness and the words to say when we witness for Him.

His power changes and transforms us so that we grow to be more like Christ and produce the fruit of the Spirit. *[pauseee]*

Charles Spurgeon says...

“The very same power which raised Christ is waiting to raise the drunkard from his drunkenness, to raise the thief from his dishonesty, to raise the Pharisee from his self-righteousness, to raise the Sadducee from his unbelief.”<sup>8</sup> *[pauseeee]*

Are you trying to resist temptation? God has the power to help you!

Are you feeling like you want to give up? God has the power to help you persevere!

Are you stuck in an enslaving addiction? God has the power to break it! *[pause]*

I personally know Christians in this very room who were stuck in addictions, unable to break free.

But through God’s power, He has broken the addiction of pornography, alcohol, or drugs. *[pause]*

That’s not to say that they aren’t tempted sometimes, but God has broken the addiction by His mighty power!

There’s nothing that God cannot do! *[pauseee]*

Are you worried about Satan and his demonic hordes?

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted at: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/ephesians-1/>.

They are defeated and under Christ's feet, so that every time a sinner is saved and a Christian resists their temptations, Christ says...

*"Satan, you can't stop me." [pauseeee]*

God's power is sufficient.

*Don't look to secular psychologists. Don't look inward. Don't look to the world's methods.*

Look to God, whose resurrection power is available *now*. [pause]

*My hope and prayer (like Paul's) is that you would know the greatness of His power.*

As Paul talks about later in Ephesians...

*He is "able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory."<sup>9</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup> Ephesians 3:20-21a (Italics is mine).