

Let's Show America Great Again

POWER TO THE POWERLESS

Ephesians 1:15-2:10

Where do we, as followers of Jesus Christ, turn when our world goes from chaos to insanity?

We live in a culture that has made each one of us the main actors of our lives and of our collective future. If anything good is going to happen, we're told, it's up to us. If things go wrong, we have nowhere to turn but ourselves. On the one hand, that makes us feel very important and empowered. On the other hand, it is overwhelming us. I can't help but wonder if this ideology is contributing to the growing epidemic of depression and despair in our world.

Some people take longer to get there than others; but sooner or later everyone gets to a place of complete powerlessness. When we get there, after we have bought into the idea that it's all up to us, where do we turn, except to different forms of distraction, sedation and suicide? That's the way of our world.

The believers who received Paul's letter to the Ephesians certainly knew the feeling of powerlessness. They lived in a culture that stripped them of many, if not most, of their social powers. Nevertheless, they embraced their powerlessness and ended up forming a movement that overturned one of the most powerful empires the world has known, a movement that has had an enormous influence on human history for the past two thousand years.

How did these powerless people become so powerful? The people who first received Paul's letter embraced their powerlessness and thereby turned their world upside down because they took to heart what they read in the next section of Paul's letter to them.

PART 1: A Prayer for the Powerless – Eph. 1:15-23

Among other things, Paul prayed that his readers would catch a glimpse of the immeasurable greatness of God's power toward them. Paul then went on to provide the glimpse for which he prayed by describing God's great might that he exerted in Jesus Christ. By this

great power, God took the lifeless corpse of Jesus on a journey that can only be described as 'out of this world.' God gave him ...

- A NEW LIFE: *'he raised him from the dead'*
- A NEW POSITION: *'and seated him at his right hand'*
- A NEW TASK: *'And put all things under his feet'*

PART 2: Power to the Powerless: Eph. 2:1-10

This power, Paul wanted us to see, is the same power that is at work in us, once we have been united with Jesus Christ. Thanks to the sin that alienates us from our Creator, we all start off dead and non-responsive to him, just like Jesus in the tomb. (Just to be clear: Jesus wasn't dead because of his own sin, but because he took our sin on himself.) We all start off powerless over the laws that control the material universe and the forces that drive our lives.

Just when everything seems finished, however, the same power that acted of Jesus' dead corpse kicks into action and acts upon us. It takes us on a journey that can only be described as 'out of this world', a journey parallel to that of Jesus Christ. Through our relationship with Christ, God gives us ...

- A NEW LIFE: *'made us alive with Christ ... and raised us up'*
- A NEW POSITION: *'and seated us with him in heavenly places'*
- A NEW TASK: *'For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.'*

Our new task is our pathway to God's power. It calls us to give up center stage and see God as the main actor of our lives and of world history. It challenges us to seek God's initiatives over our own, even when those initiatives make no sense to us. It calls us to get up and join God by walking in the works he has prepared for us to do, even when we feel powerless. When we follow this path, no matter what the cost, God supplies his power in ways that we cannot imagine. That power turns our lives around. It turns the world upside down.