Good morning. Glad you’re here today. We’re starting a new four-week series today. Pastor Dave and I are going to talk the next four weeks about “Living with Power beyond Ourselves.” I’m sure all of us here want to live victorious lives. No one wants to live a defeated life. But where do you get the power to live victoriously? How do you live with power when all things around you seem to be sapping your energy? You may have financial problems, physical problems, relationship problems, and all sorts of problems. Not to mention the chaos and destruction and killings going on in this country and in the world at large. All these things are more than enough to make someone cringe in fear and cower in defeat.

We have to admit that our human strength cannot face up to many of these challenges. If it were so, this world would have been a paradise by now. In fact, the reason it’s not a paradise is because of human failures. So, were do we get the power to live victoriously?

We get it from beyond ourselves. We don’t look to ourselves but we look beyond ourselves to help us. We need help from outside. We need power beyond ourselves.

Jesus says to his disciples before he went to heaven, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you”. (Acts 1:8)

This morning, I’d like to share with you the power of the Holy Spirit in your life. I’d like to talk about what the Holy Spirit can do for you. First, this video:
What you just saw was Iron Man’s assistant replacing his power core or Arc Reactor. According to the legend, this reactor is the source of his power as a superhero. At one point in the movie, the hero informs us that this power core is capable of generating three gigawatts of energy. That’s roughly the amount of power that three large nuclear reactors can create, and in the movie that power is wrapped up in a piece of metal the size of a tennis ball.

Most everyone in the REAL world admits that’s not even remotely possible. There’s no way anything that small could generate that much power. But – hey – Iron Man is a comic book character. He’s not supposed to be bound by the laws of physics. That’s why he’s a superhero and we’re not!

But in the Bible we’re told that as Christians we have an advantage that Iron Man didn’t have. We actually do have a power core inside of us and that power core is far more powerful than any nuclear power plant.

Romans 8:11 tells us “And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.” The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives inside of YOU who are Christians.

Imagine the amount of energy that would be required to raise someone from the dead. That energy, that power is inside your heart. There isn’t a nuclear power plant on face of the earth could hope to create that much power. And it’s all, right there, inside of you.

Now, that wasn’t always how God did things. In the Old Testament it appears that God rarely placed His Spirit INSIDE of people. Bezalel (Exodus 35:30ff) the architect of the Tabernacle was one of these. But ordinarily, when God imparted
His Spirit to the Old Testament saints, the Scriptures speak of the Spirit coming UPON them.

In Judges we’re told “…the Spirit of the LORD came UPON Gideon, and he blew a trumpet… and summoned Israel together to challenge the Midianites” (Judges 6:34)

In Judges 14 “…The Spirit of the LORD came UPON (Samson) in power so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat…” (Judges 14:6)

1 Samuel tells us “Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him (David) in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came UPON David in power.” (1 Samuel 16:13)

Again and again throughout the Old Testament God’s Spirit came UPON certain people to give them power. But God’s Spirit only came upon select individuals for specific purposes. All that changed when Jesus came.

In John 14:16-17 Jesus promised “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be IN you.”

And in John 7:38-39, Jesus declared “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time THE SPIRIT HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”

You see, in the Old Testament God’s Spirit only came upon certain select individuals. Judges, Prophets, Kings and such. But in the New Testament God’s Spirit was to be INSIDE each and every Christian. In 1 Corinthians 3:16, Paul says to the followers of Jesus: “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives IN you?”
Like the power core in Iron Man – the Spirit of God is always inside the Christian. He’s always there to give us His power. His energy.

SO, what exactly does God’s Spirit do for us?

If the Holy Spirit is our POWER source from God… what kind of power does He give me?

First, God’s Spirit gives us

1. THE POWER TO DEAL WITH A BROKEN LIFE.

One of the writers of the Iron Man movie, Gerry Conway, made this observation: “Here you have this character, who on the outside is invulnerable… just can’t be touched, but inside is a wounded figure. Stan made it very much an in-your-face wound, his heart was broken, you know, literally broken.”

Iron man was a wounded man. A broken man. His life was ruined by a battle wound that should have destroyed him. But when the power core was installed, Iron man was give the ability to live again. In Romans 7:15-24, Paul tells about the damage sin had done to his heart.

He says because of sin “even when he wanted to do right… he couldn’t get it done.”

“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.”

(In other words, his sin proved that the Law was right when it condemned him as a sinner).

“As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me.

I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; nooo, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is
right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

(pause) What a wretched man I am!
(pause) Who will rescue me from this body of death?”

That’s what life is like without God’s Spirit inside us. It’s like living inside of tomb… inside a body of death. There’s this nagging feeling that we’ve messed everything up. Sometimes it can even get to the point where we have this feeling that we’re just loser. Wretched creatures.

Who could possibly fix this for us?
Who can rescue from this body of death???

“Ah”, says Paul

“Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! … There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 7:25; 8:1-2)

You see, here’s how it works: You and I are broken inside. There’s something inside of our souls we can’t fix. It’s like having a disease that attacks our bodies.

If I have disease who do I usually go to see? A doctor. I go to the doctor because I need someone who can get inside of my body, someone I can trust to remove the diseased cells and help me heal.

That is what God’s Spirit is designed to do. God’s Spirit gets inside of my heart. He repairs that which was broken. He removes the diseased parts of my soul and He makes me new again. And He can do that because He is living and active. He is God! He’s right there inside every one of us who’s a Christian here today. He’s fixing you on a constant basis. He is continually removing the deadness of sin
from your heart. And He is faithfully putting God’s medicine inside of you to heal you.

Thanks be to God - through Christ Jesus - the law of the Spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death.

But wait, there’s more! He doesn’t just give you the power to deal with your broken life. He also gives you

**2. THE POWER TO LIVE A POWER-FILLED LIFE**

A few years ago, when we were still living in Staten Island, NY, the power was out on the north side of the city. I first noticed it when I saw that the traffic lights weren’t working. I didn’t think much about it until I tried to stop into CVS and pick up some batteries and one of the clerks met me at the door and explained:

“I’m sorry we have no electricity. We can’t sell you anything.”

That’s odd! Such a thing never occurred to me. I just took it for granted that I could walk into that store – even in a power outage – and get whatever I wanted. But that wasn’t true.

They had no electricity. They had no power. Without that electricity, their machines wouldn’t work. They couldn’t run their computers, they couldn’t open their cash registers. They couldn’t log their sales. They were literally shut down because they had no power.

It was only when that clerk told me they couldn’t sell anything that I realized how important electricity had been for their store. Electricity empowered them to do what they were meant to do. In the same way, God’s Spirit empowers you and me to do what God designed us to do.

For instance, the Bible tells me that I am designed to pray. In **Romans 8:26** says  “The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”
Have you ever felt like God wasn’t hearing your prayers? Like you could pray and pray and pray and you just weren’t getting through? Of course you have. We all have. But Romans 8 says - don’t worry about it. You have a direct line to God! You’re patched directly into God, because God is patched directly into you.

You don’t even have to say anything. God’s Spirit is so in tune with your spirit that God senses your every emotion as you feel them.

He knows your joys and your sorrows even when you have trouble putting those emotions into words. God understands everything you feel, because God’s Spirit is right there inside you. So, don’t worry about having WEAK prayers and your prayers making it to God. The Spirit of God is your power line, and He gives a special umph to your petitions.

So He empowers when we feel our prayers are weak. And He empowers us when we feel our lives are weak.

**Romans 8:27 & 28** says “...the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

God’s Spirit is active in helping turn our lives around. He’s interceding for you at the throne. He is petitioning on your behalf.

What that says to me is: When your life seems to be falling apart, God is actively planning how to fix it. He’s thinking about you in your specific circumstances. He isn’t going to churn out some “cookie cutter” solution to your problem. He is planning a specific response to your specific difficulty.

One person put it this way: “When you are DOWN to nothing.... God is UP to something!!!”

Now, there seems to be a direct tie between the Spirit interceding for us and “all things working together for the good of those who love God.”
Notice it doesn’t say “all things are good”. And it doesn’t say that “all things that happened to you were from God”. What it does say is this: it doesn’t matter what happens in your life. All things WILL work together for your good because the Spirit is interceding for you.

So, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to deal with our broken lives. He gives us the power to live a power-filled life and thirdly, he gives us

3. The Power to Undergo Transformation

Do you know that man? How about the magazine he is holding? That man is Herbert W. Armstrong, the founder of the Worldwide Church of God, a pseudo-Christian religion. It was considered a cult, much like the Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Iglesia ni Cristo, the Mormons, and other religious organizations that claim to be Christian but are not. Armstrong founded this religion in 1933 which was originally called the Radio Church of God and renamed it to the Worldwide Church of God in 1968. I’m so familiar with this religion because, you know why, my eldest sister used to subscribe to their magazine, The Plain Truth. It was free and so why not? I was in high school then. I remember eagerly anticipating every month the arrival of the magazine. And I was fascinated by their teachings. Which were kind of weird, as I look back at them now. One of the things they believed is that the ten lost tribes of Israel, if you’ve heard of them, journeyed by boat from Israel and traveled north until they arrived in the British Isles. Thus, they believed that the British are the descendants of the ancient Israelites.

Now, just like the cults, they had discarded many of Christianity’s core beliefs like the Trinity, salvation by the grace of God, the existence of hell, the existence of the soul, the literal second coming of Christ, and a host of others. What they did believe is that the Ten Commandments is still in operation, meaning, you had to observe each of the commandments to be saved, you had to observe all the Feasts in the Old Testament to be saved, they didn’t eat blood, and they didn’t celebrate
Christmas, birthdays, and Easter Sunday. But they observed the Sabbath. They were pretty much an Old Testament-based religion and, therefore, very legalistic. And, of course, they didn’t believe in the person of the Holy Spirit. Because of their status, they appeared in the book “Kingdom of the Cults” by Walter Martin.

Notice I used the past tense in describing what they believed in. You know why?

Within a few years of Armstrong's death in 1986, the succeeding church administration completely reversed the denomination's doctrines and teachings to be compatible with mainstream Evangelical Christianity. Armstrong’s successor, Joseph Tkach, Sr, and then, his son, Joseph Tkach, Jr., realized that their religion is so far from true Christianity that they righted the boat, so to speak. Now, they believe what we believe. They have renamed their organization to Grace Communion International and is now a member of the National Association of Evangelicals. Joseph Tkach, Jr, the present Pastor-General of GCI, wrote a book called, “Transformed by Truth” that chronicles this remarkable but long, hard, and often painful transition from being a cult to being a true Christian denomination.

Folks, this is unprecedented in church history. We’ve never seen a wholesale transformation of an organization coming from within. Why did this happen? Because its leaders began to open themselves to the work and teachings of the Holy Spirit. Armstrong himself expressed certain doubts about his own teachings toward the end of his life. And now, Grace Communion International believes in the Holy Spirit as a person, the third person of the Trinity.

Jesus says, “But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.” (John 16:13)

Finally, we come to the fourth thing the Holy Spirit does. He gives us

4. The Power to Have Eternal Life
Now, if you noticed in the video clip earlier, the power core was essential for Iron Man’s survival. Without the power core his heart would fail and his body would shut down. If that power core were ever removed… he would die.

In the same way WITHOUT the Spirit of God inside you and I – we will die. God’s Spirit inside of us is the only thing between us and judgment. Without God’s Spirit inside us, we would face eternity in hell. And God doesn’t want that.

But Ephesians 1:13-14 tells us that once we became Christians we “…were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.”

In that Last Day - when we come before the Judgment Seat of God – God isn’t going to look over our past to see if we’ve done enough good to be saved. You couldn’t be good enough to be good enough to get into Heaven anyway. God’s not into Karma.

Instead, on the Day of Judgment, He’s going to look and see if we’ve been sealed with His Holy Spirit. If the Spirit is there, we will LIVE for eternity. We will not face the second death. We will not endure the fires of hell. We will LIVE because of the power of God’s Holy Spirit!

The question now is, do you have the seal of the Holy Spirit on you? You see, the Holy Spirit cannot work in your life, cannot give you the power to live unless you let him. And the way to have his seal is to accept Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior. Believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for you to save you from your sins. Believe that he resurrected from the dead and you too will resurrect someday. There are so many other things the Holy Spirit can do for you aside from these four I mentioned. But to experience his power, you have to put your trust in Jesus first.