

Contending for the Fullness of God's Power

I. CONTENDING FOR GOD'S HIGHEST

³ *I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend (fight) earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. (Jude 3)*

- A. **Definition:** to contend means to fight for something while striving against the difficulties that hinder its release. We have a vision to walk in everything that God will give the human spirit in this generation with a holy pain concerning our powerlessness and spiritual barrenness (Mt. 5:4).
- B. The apostle Jude exhorted the believers under his leadership to fight earnestly to walk in the faith or in the quality of life in the Spirit that was originally given to the saints by the first apostles.
1. We contend for New Testament **doctrine** in our understanding.
 2. We contend for New Testament **lifestyles** including purity, prayer and fasting, (Mt. 5-7).
 3. We contend for New Testament **power** in our life. In other words, we are to contend for a breakthrough of the ***fullness*** of God's power.
- C. Contending to walk in NT doctrine, lifestyle and power includes five components:
1. We must first have a ***clear vision*** for the breakthrough of God's power by feeding our spirit on what God did in the Book of Acts and through revival movements in history.
 2. We must commit to actively seek the breakthrough of power through ***fasting and prayer***.
 3. We walk in the tension of being ***faithful and grateful*** in the days of small beginnings.
 4. We seek to ***fully obey God*** without any compromise. We are to embrace the "Sermon on the Mount lifestyle" (Mt. 5-7). Prayer is never a substitute for obedience.
 5. We must bear the reproach that comes to those who seek to walk in the fullness of God's power. There is a God orchestrated "stigma on the anointing" (2 Cor. 12:7-9).
- D. We must contend for more because the Christian life is a "cooperation" with God's grace. **God will not do our part** and **we cannot do His part**. If we do not do our part then God withholds some of the blessing He would have given us. Some "trust" the sovereignty of God in a non-biblical way by "trusting" God to do what He has assigned to us. This is negligence and presumption. God has given us a dynamic role in determining some of the measure of the "quality of life" that we experience in the natural and in the Spirit. There are blessings that God has chosen to give, but **only** if His people rise up to ask for them (Isa 30:18-19; Ezek. 22:30).

² *You do not have because you do not ask. (Jas 4:2)*

II. WE MUST HAVE A VISION FOR THE BREAKTHROUGH OF GOD'S FULLNESS

²⁴ ***Take heed what you hear (believe about what God will give you). With the same measure you use (apply to your life), it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. (Mk. 4:24)***

A. Take heed (be careful) in what you hear or in what you believe is God's measure of blessing for your life. In other words, be careful in determining what you will contend for in your experience in God. Most are easily satisfied with too small of an expectation in God.

B. Feed your spirit on examples of scriptural promises of a great release of power in the future.

¹² ***Most assuredly, I (Jesus) say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.* (Jn. 14:12)**

¹⁷ ***It shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. 18 On My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days...19 I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath: blood and fire and vapor of smoke. 20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. (Acts 2:17-20)***

³ ***I will give power to my Two Witnesses, and they will prophesy 1,260 days (3½ years)...5 If anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies...6 These have power to shut heaven, so no rain falls...and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.* (Rev. 11:3-6)**

¹⁵ ***As in the days when you came out of...Egypt, I will show them wonders.* (Mic. 7:15)**

C. Feed your spirit on examples of God's power in the lives of the first apostles (Acts 2:1-4, 37-47; 3:4-10; 4:31-37; 5:5-20; 6:8, 10, 15; 7:54-60; 8:4-8, 17, 23-24, 26, 29, 39; 9:3-9, 17-18, 31-42; 10:3-4, 10-11, 30-31, 44-46; 11:5-18, 26, 28; 12:7-10, 23-24; 13:2, 11, 52; 14:3; 8-10; 16:9, 18, 26; 18:9-10; 19:6, 11-20; 20:9-10; 22:6-13; 23:11; 26:13-18; 27:23-24; 28:3-6).

¹¹ ***God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. 13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits...14 There were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. 15 The evil spirit said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" 16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 This became known to all...in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of Jesus was magnified. 18 Many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. 19 Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. (Acts 19:11-20)***

- D. Feed your spirit on the examples of those throughout Church history who functioned mightily in God's power. It is important to study the history of revivals to stir up your faith. Some prominent examples of people who have functioned in God's miracle power in recent history are John G. Lake (1870-1935), Marie Woodworth-Etter (1844-1924), John Alexander Dowie (1847-1907), Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944), Smith Wigglesworth (1859-1947), William Branham (1909-1965). I recommend the book All Things Are Possible by David Harrell, Jr.
- E. Howard Pittman's testimony: the End-Time Church will operate in the spirit of Elijah
¹³ *The angel (Gabriel) said, "Zacharias...you shall call his name John....16 he will turn many...to the Lord. 17 He will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah...to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Lk. 1:13-18)*
- F. First we seek God's face then we earnestly seek His hand (power). We are to seek the spiritual gifts by praying for them, making room for them and then by using them.
³¹ *Earnestly desire the best gifts. ^{14:1} Desire spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. 39 Desire earnestly to prophesy... (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1, 39)*

III. WE CONTEND FOR GOD'S FULLNESS WITH A LIFESTYLE OF FASTING AND PRAYER

¹⁵ *"Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely... I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." 18 Jesus rebuked the demon...and the child was cured. 19 The disciples...said, "Why could we not cast him out?" 20 So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief...21 however, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." (Mt. 17:15-21)*

- A. Determine that you will pay any price to see the breakthrough of God in your life and city. Refuse to back down. Settle the issue and ask God, "Why not me?" If not you, then who? If not now, then when? If not here, then where? We do not earn God's blessings by our prayers. Prayer is God's chosen way to enable us to more fully cooperate with Him in releasing more blessing.
¹² *From the days of John the Baptist...the kingdom of heaven suffers (permits/rewards) violence, and the violent (those with holy resolution to fast/pray) take it by force. (Mt. 11:12)*
- B. Paul commended himself as God's servant who was committed to much fasting.
⁴ *In all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, 5 in stripes...in sleeplessness, in fastings... (2 Cor. 6:4-5)*
²⁷ *In weariness and toil...in fastings often, in cold and nakedness... (2 Cor. 11:27)*
- C. David's life vision was to provide a place for God to dwell or manifest His presence on earth.
¹ *LORD, remember David and all his afflictions; 2 How he swore to the LORD, and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob: 3 "Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house, or go up to the comfort of my bed; 4 I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, 5 until I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob." (Ps. 132:1-5)*

IV. CONTENDING FOR FULLNESS WHILE FAITHFUL AND GRATEFUL IN SMALLNESS

- A. We must walk in the tension of being grateful and faithful while being desperate for more of His power. We pray for revival because we see what we lack, yet we give thanks for what we have.

¹⁰ *For who has despised the day of small things? (Zech. 4:10)*

- B. We must contend for God's fullness while being *faithful and grateful* in the days of small beginnings or in the "*pre-revival small measure*" of His manifest anointing.

¹⁷ *Because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities. (Lk. 19:17)*

V. SEEK TO FULLY OBEY GOD WITHOUT COMPROMISE (SERMON ON THE MOUNT)

- A. We must seek to fully obey God or to walk out a Sermon on the Mount lifestyle (Mt. 5-7). We must seek to live without compromise by declaring war on all known sin in our lives. Prayer and fasting are never a substitute for a lifestyle of obedience in the other areas of our life.

¹¹ *I beg you as...pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul... (1 Pet. 2:11)*

- B. The Sermon on the Mount is the constitution of God's Kingdom, in which Jesus calls us to live out the 8 beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-12) as we pursue full obedience (Mt. 5:48). This pursuit includes making a *covenant with our eyes* (Ps. 101:3; Job 31:1), *bridling our speech* (Jas 3:2; Eph. 4:29-5:4), *managing our time* (Eph. 5:15-16) *and money to increase the Kingdom beyond our personal comfort* (1 Tim. 6:8) as we engage in *communing prayer* with the Spirit (2 Cor. 13:14).

- C. The pursuit of full obedience is different than attaining it. There are powerful dynamics that occur in our heart when we soberly aim at pursuing 100-fold obedience. Pursuing obedience in 98% of your life has a limited blessing on it. It is in the last 2% that we receive "double" grace on our heart. We rob people of this glorious reality by offering them a "lower standard of grace." *The cost of non-discipleship is very high.*

VI. BEARING REPROACH: THE "STIGMA OF THE ANOINTING"

- A. We must bear the reproach that comes with God's power. Accept the "God orchestrated stigma" that is designed to humble those who walk in unusual manifestations of power.

⁷ *Lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted... (2 Cor. 12:7)*

- B. We must take a stand and bear the reproach before and after the breakthrough of God. Do not wait until it becomes popular to seek God with spiritual violence. Join in with those who are taking a stand or be the first to take a stand. God will allow us to look foolish.

⁹ *For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last...for we have been made a spectacle ...both to angels and to men. ¹⁰ We are fools for Christ's sake...we are weak...we are dishonored!...¹² being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure... (1 Cor. 4:9-12)*