

S.W. July 11, 82 A.M.

"THE RETURN WITH POWER"

Luke 4:14

And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and there went out a fame of him throughout all the region round about.

Among the qualities possessed by great men, there is one that sometimes defies analysis. It is that wonderful quality of power which is magnetic. It is possible that it may have some all in the physical nature. But it is more than physical. It may be something of the mind. In the intellectual regions. Or it may be something that is felt to be more than reason or argument. It is a priceless influence. And it is a range of power that is greater than that of ordinary men.

It puts within reach of the man who owns it - an active, useful life. It is like a halo round about his head. Where he moves is light. Which never was on land or sea - seems to shine among men. It is a power that is (different). It is breath-taking. It is (satisfying)

In our cult-seeking society, a man once said he had been a Baptist, a Methodist, and a Presbyterian. And he told his temporary pastor, I am planning to joining the Congregationalists. Thoughtfully the old minister replied, well, "I don't think it does any harm to change labels on an empty bottle." Millions of empty bottles today, think to fill themselves by changing the label. When they rather lack faith.

Christ returned the land of his early days, and his early life. It was somewhat of its homeland - and he came back among those who had known him. Who would be disposed to expect very little from him. He had grown up in their midst. And, he made his power felt. Now there was interested curiosity. Perhaps good-natured contempt. On the other hand, there might have been toleration because it was unexpected, that he should possess such.

He was like a fresh brook. Yet when he spoke, they wondered. The words which flowed from his lips were as a refreshing mountain stream, of cool water. It brought color, brightness, to the weary meadows below. He spoke to minds that were weary with anxiety. To spirits that had been broken down with the weights of life. To hearts that were seared and over-pressured with life's pleasures. And full of life's hopelessness. In a sense, he brought new life.

V. 18 - He brought a reverence to the ancient prophecies. Of restored powers - which had been heard without taking heed. They were just mere matters of course. They did not have real meaning.

The Prophets had sung of a golden age. But familiarity with the beautiful song of hope had faded. Upon decayed parts. Doubtless they thought, some day they thought, the blind might see. And receive their sight. The lepers might be cleansed. The lame might walk. The dead be raised. The poor have the good news preached to them.

But when Jesus read the golden words of joy in V. 18 - they sounded as though they were charged with living men. They suggested realization.

And when he ended the reading, he said, "this day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Like a song, it brought courage and brightens the hope, and calms the Spirit, and the words fell upon those who heard. And they marveled at the gracious words of his lips.

His word was with power. Fresh power - power of the Spirit. In which he had returned to his own land.

Now who desires such power? Who would not desire to have such power in the world. To be able to bring new courage to the faint-hearted. To those who were disturbed with an anxious spirit. To banish the ache and the memories that people held in their minds. And to infuse a new vigor - they were weary. And this would cause them to rise up and walk in a path of duty. This would put brightness in their eye. This would take away despondent feelings. Who would not desire something like this. But whence comes the ability. Where shall we win this great secret of such power.

I might insert here the story of an Irishman, who had just found Christ. As a newborn baby requires milk, so the regenerated soul needs to nourish on milk. This man was converted through reading the New Testament. He rejoiced in his new found treasure. He delighted to get into the sacred pages whenever opportunity might permit. One day the parish priest called to see him. He found him reading the precious volume that had brought such a blessing to his soul. Pat, he said sternly, what book is that that you are reading. ?

Sure, your reverence, was the reply -- it is the New Testament. The New Testament - why, that is not a book for an ignorant man like you to read. That is for the clergy, who go to college to learn its real meaning. Then give it to the people. But unlearned folks like you will get all kinds of wrong ideas from it.

But your reverence, said Pat, I have just been reading here that it is the blessed Apostle Peter himself that says, "as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word. That you may grow thereby - and sure it is just a babe in Christ, I am, and it is the milk of the Word that I am after. And that is why I am reading it for myself.

That is alright Pat, in a way, but the Almighty God has appointed priests to be the milkmen. And when you want the milk of the Word, you should come to me. And I will give it to you - as you are able to bear it.

Oh sure, your reverence, you know I kept a cow of my own out there in the shed. When I was sick, I hired a man to milk her for me. I soon found out that he was stealing half of the milk. And filling the bucket up with water. Well, I discharged him. And milked my own cow. And now it is the rich cream that I am getting all of the time. And your reverence, when I depended upon you for the milk of the Word - man, it was the milk and water stuff that you gave me. And now I am milking my own cow, in this case too - and it is the rich cream of the Word on which my soul is feeding everyday .!

There is nothing that will take desire of such power. The lack of diligence of the

Bible, yourself - you cannot get full assurance unless you search these Scriptures. And believers, will discover something of this power - if they will hunt for their own milk.

The best gifts can neither be bought nor commanded. The search cannot discover, nor any energy appropriate that. There is no industry - this magic power like wisdom is not found by those who look for it. The deep saith, it is not with me. Knowledge can be gained by study. Wisdom is a gift of life that only comes with experiences. And the power with which we are speaking today, belongs not to the gifts of the hand, or the head. Which have some practice of command. But it must radiate from a man's Spirit to become a throne of reality.

The next thing we note is that here is a type of humanity. He returned in the power of the Spirit. He returned from the wilderness of sorrow, temptation, and loneliness. And whatever it's origin was, he has drawn forth in the experience of the wilderness. And men wonder at his gracious words. And they say, is this not the carpenter's son. Whence did he win this power. Where did he acquire the secret and the charm of those words. That revive hearts.

The wilderness and the temptation, precede it - the gracious words.

This is a type -- no man gets this power without a conflict. You put side by side the sayings of Jesus. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted. Here is the type -- Jesus first let the water of baptism. Where he had been anointed by the Spirit. The next, he was led up into the fire of temptation.

And the next thing that we read is -- that he returned in power to Galilee.

The same Spirit which drove him into loneliness, and temptation - abode with him and was a power upon him when he returned. All of life lies there. Under the Spirit's leading. Into the darkness, into the storm, and into the rain. We go. It seems to numb us. But this is where the power is gained into the wilderness they are led. And there alone, can they learn the Spirit's power. The conflict is the school room where power and courage are really learned.

What do we know about power. And the principle of it.

In the business world - men talk about the survival of the fittest. They are known by their metal. All of life is a conflict. And a vigorous effort is made to survive. But they do more than survive. Their power of survival is set forward in the conflict. The quickness and the readiness of the mind. Is always in present danger. And they have learned that no theory is always a sure-fire success.

Another thing we know is, that it is true in the world of the mind. The robust mind is vigorous - but it never grows when problems are (skirted) around. And difficult questions are evaded.

The boy, who in the school room (copies) his neighbor's work. Or solution. Or gets somebody else to do his work. This proves that he will not be able to face the problems of life, when he comes out. He who shirks difficulties. Will find that his powers shrink.

Now thoughtful men or men who have thought - power comes to those who have exercised their powers. It seems to us to be easy, that a successful man - he who does it has had the courage to face it when it was (not) easy. So you see that we have learned that a business man and the mind of man is something that is wonderful - but it has come from continued effort of self - he has worked on it. And he has so grown in it that it has become his second nature, through the use of his mind, and the use of toil and effort. This is the order of life. And this order Christ submitted. Never by his teachings did he give approval to the idea of greatness. Consisting of immunity, from the order of life.

Jesus He taught and he lived as he taught. The laws of God. He was obedient to the law for man's sake. He was baptized - with the symbol of water. But here is the blood of conflict. The lonely wilderness, the temptation. In the wilderness he met all of these elements and these forces. That are ever at work, to discipline the soul. And out of strife and the stress of life came forth the powers which mold men's hearts. And fashion the characters.

Another thing a man knows is pain. This plays a part in educating a man's power. Sometimes hymns have been written - and they sound the sweetest to our ears. When they are products of a heart that has been well nigh broken. Sorrow has taught these men to write.

Another thing that we know and learn, is that of isolation or loneliness. Into the wilderness to be tempted, goes the son of man. For there must be the discipline of loneliness, as well as of suffering.

No man is strong who has not learned to live alone. Man indeed is social. We need social life. But another power or instinct that a man must draw upon, is that which over and over again comes to him, when he is out there by himself.

Let me illustrate this. Here is a boy who separates himself from his friends and comrades. He seeks a quiet nook where he can take his favorite book. Now, he is not only showing signs of individuality, he is preparing for life - in which he will be able to hold his own. Against the opinions and the customs of others.

Often this isolation is enforced. And the man, like a hammer is being cracked to pieces. But he learns the weight of matters, the simple truth. That he must be in the wilderness. And when we murmur at our solitude, and feel the isolation - God will not have us to be just a pale copy, of the rest of the world. We may gain force, reality, simplicity, and depth of conviction. Above all, we will gain reliance upon the divine - the unseen power.

Manhood ought to be able to stand alone though all around it falls. When the multitude bows to the golden image, the man who is worthy of the name of Jesus Christ, ought to be able to stand upward.

There are times when we will be with the multitudes in a right and in a true thing.

But we have learned that even (loneliness) is not enough - and circumstances may not be everything. It is not because Jesus Christ spent 40 days alone in solitude that he was strong. It was because of the power which he matured in the wilderness.

It is difficult to see the nature of this power. It was divine. And it was the best kind of power as we describe it, and we see him live by a divine power when we review these temptations, and human trials. But there is one point - common walk. And that is, the conflict is the conflict between the Heavenly, and the worldly law of life.

Jesus put it in these simple words - not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeded out of the mouth.

Now the key note is here struck. It is not the (earthly) law, but it is by the (Heavenly) law that a man must live.

To rely on angels to help is an action that is carnal.

Then to take the Kingdoms of the world at a price of bowing the knee to an evil one, at best was doing evil. These are all but earthly ways and worldly laws.

The man who lives by these will have no power in the crowd. And he is but sinking

into the current. He is going the easiest and the cheapest. Heaven's light has no vision for such a man. But on the other hand, the man who has said "no" to the subtle evil, which has come to him, when he was alone - and who has detected the Devil's footprint, is the man who will bring the world the power which will influence others. Even to healing. He proves to have the power that does not follow the line of least resistance. And he bears witness to the reality. Other than the power of this world.

Our Lord returned from the wilderness into Galilee. He returned to a dull, sleeping, mechanical life in Nazareth. Where many people felt that life was worth living. They were victims of the common place, the ordinary occupation, the spiritless labors, hopelessness, they were robbed of hope. And they were bound by custom and no Heavenly light shone upon the poor lot. No Heavenly music. No one seemed to hear their cries.

And the Lord would show them the Heavenly light in ordinary human light. The beam of divine brightness did not belong to the ages past. But to a new day.

y 21 So the keynote had something to say about the present - V. 21. Jesus said to them about the hope of their ancestors, this day, and in your ears - is good news." It is hope. Now here are the needs of Heavenly powers to vanish the evils of life. And the power is already here.

He who found God in the wilderness should declare that Heaven is right here near to your homes. And to your hearts, and to you men who are tired - but are laboring in the fields every day. To anxious women who are fulfilling the duties of

the home. To you precious little children who are experiencing for the first time the trials of learning. And life's discipline. Here is a message for all of you.

Our Lord has gone into the wilderness that he might bring hope. He who has known his father in the glory of Heaven, has proved his love in the nearness of the wilderness, and in the lonely place, and now has on that great divine presence. Even the angels minister to Him. And there was no place in his life that the power could not be found. There was no area in which God was not found.

And men were instructed that they need not wait for the distant day to inherit something, such as inheritance which did not belong to children's children. But he said "this day, and in your ears," the hindering ills, the oppressing sorrows of life may disappear. As Jesus spoke he knew this was true. What a difference it makes when a life is filled this way. A man who found his joy in the will of God is full of assurance. He knew he was saved - and for a time was filled with that great joy. But one day, an awful thought came to him. What if I should sin in such a way as to lose all of this. And be lost myself after all. Oh, this dread fell upon him. Then he thought about it day and night in great distress. One evening he was reading, in the Bible, if you then be risen with Christ. Seek those things which are above. For Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above and not on things of the earth. Til you are dead, then your life is hidden with things of God. In Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

As his eyes fell upon the precious verses, and they touched his ears, and something with certainty gripped his soul. He forgot that he was in the presence of other people - and he shouted, glory to God. "Who ever heard of a man drowning with his head that high above water."

Now we may smile at his conception, but it is the truth of the full assurance of understanding. He realized his union with Christ - he saw it with his head - that it was already in Heaven secure. And the practice outcome seemed to exhort him that he had this power and this life to go on.

29 When Jesus came in this power in V. 29 - they wanted to take him out and throw him over the edge of the mountain which over-hung their town. Was it because he spoke the soft word of hope to them. Did he make their dream seem near at hand. Did he wake up something of winter time in their souls.

No, his words were simple truth. In the wilderness he had proven them true. And there was a great difference between him and them.

One thing thou lackest. It was like the Robert T. Grant, who was riding in a Pullman reading his Bible. He noticed a lot of people sitting around doing nothing. He opened up his bag and he got out some tracts - he distributed them - and then came back to his seat. A young man followed him and said what did you give me this for? Why, it is a message from Heaven, he said. It will give rest to your soul. The young man sneered and said, I used to believe in that stuff years ago. I went to school and got educated. I threw it all overboard. I found that there was nothing to it.

Well, will you let me read you something that I was going over just a moment ago, Mr. Grant said. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Is there nothing in that, young man. I have known the blessedness of that for many years. The man replied, go on read the next. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters, he restoreth my soul, he leadeth me in the paths of

righteousness for his name sake, is there nothing in that.

Pardon me, sir, let me hear some more said the young man. Yeah, thou I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Is there nothing in that.

Then the young man cried, oh, forgive me Sir. There is everything in that. My mother died with those words upon her lips, and sought me to trust her Saviour. But I have forgotten the words, and I have gotten far away from Him. You have brought it all back to me. Tell me more. And as God's servant opened up the truth and the way of salvation and the power, the young man who had been so careless, was convicted of sin and led to trust in Christ. And confess him as Saviour right there in the Pullman.

Yes, there is everything in the blessed companionship of Christ. And that is something that these people had to realize. That right there in their midst was one who had power. And it was something that they lacked. And of course, they became resentful in spirit. They broke out in revolt against him. They had not been baptized with the divine Spirit. Therefore, they were charmed by his gracious words. They could see his Heavenly light on earth. But as he spoke to the deeper heart needs it stirred them.

For him the wilderness had yielded up a blessing. For he had returned from the wilderness with the witness and baptism of the dove-like spirit.

Now this day, could have been like the day when Elisha knew what he wanted. He could have asked for many things - but there was one thing he wanted a double portion of the Spirit. And he asked this of Elisha, the prophet. Now we read that when he requested this, and as the chariot took Elijah up, that Elisha rent his own clothes and took up the mantle of Elijah. There is a blessed lesson there. We must tear up the wrappings of our own righteousness if we are to be clothed with power from on high. We must get rid of these filthy rags which we are wearing. We must rend the garments of self-sufficiency, we must tear up these things which are fleshly, and let God drop on us the mantle of his Holy Spirit. But it will not fall on us as long as we have dirty raiment. And we depend upon our own goodness. We must rend our own clothes.

We try to swim across Jordan - that God would part before us, if we would take his mantle and use it. We always work out ways to get across Jordan - we build our bridges, launch our boat, and we rush in like fools. And we read about this man, the spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha. And the people met him, and they bowed themselves to the ground before him. Now these men knew real power when they watched it at work.

Most of our religious activity today, and work in this world and in the church, is just regular routine stuff.

But when we have the blessed spirit, we have this unusual power.

I asked the question today, who is a candidate for this power.

It is vain, vain, for men today to hope that someway they will get this power.

Unless we are willing to go into the wilderness, and be carried there by the anointing of the divine Spirit, things are to us - as we are to them. And life is to us, as we are to it.

Sorrow, the battle of temptation, loneliness is capable of bringing courage and strength. But it is only upon those who are ready to receive the blessing.

According to our faith, it will be with us. But for all it is true, that if we carry into the wilderness the general trustful, righteousness, loving spirit - the wilderness will yield the blessing.

And we can come back to the commonplace life and find it no longer commonplace. New energy for the duties will be found. Power and helpfulness will increase. And we will be like our Lord Jesus if we desire to return unto Galilee our own Galilee in the power of the Spirit.