

January 28, 2007
“Passion and Power”
Ps 63:1-8

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It's amazing how God put together the messages for January. First I preached on that last Sunday of 2006 and spoke about having Passion for Christ in the New Year by making time to be with God, by removing any barrier in your relationship with God, and by praying for passion...pray to have the same passion for Jesus as God the Father has for the Son.

Now, Mike Caiazzo was not here when I preached on passion for Christ. He preached on the first Sunday in January. He thought he was going to speak on a different topic, but as he prepared God spoke to him about preaching on having passion for Jesus.

The second Sunday Pastor Nick spoke on the promise of God. That being right with God, and having an intimate relationship with Him is not by what we do, but by faith in what Jesus has done. It is not by following the law and rules, but faith in a promise.

Now, John Mercurio was not here when Pastor Nick preached. He was ministering at another church (the Nazarene Church in Bay Shore). What message did God give him? He spoke on the promises of God which we must claim by faith and the intimate relationship God wants to have with us.

Today I want to again speak about promise and passion. Specifically, the promise of power when we have passion for Jesus.

Does speaking of a passionate hunger for God make you uncomfortable? We ended December and began the New Year reading through the Psalms (in our OT readings). I love the Psalms, how about you? Let me ask you, as you meditate on the Psalms how do you feel about the emotion of David and his passion for God? The psalms he wrote are a testimony to his intense pursuit of God. Let me give you a few examples:

Last week we sang this Psalm:
Ps 42:1-2 (NIV)
As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, O God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

This week we read:
Ps 63:1-8 NLT
O God, you are my God;
I earnestly search for you.
My soul thirsts for you;
my whole body longs for you

in this parched and weary land
where there is no water.

2 I have seen you in your sanctuary
and gazed upon your power and glory.
3 Your unfailing love is better to me than life itself;
how I praise you!
4 I will honor you as long as I live,
lifting up my hands to you in prayer.
5 You satisfy me more than the richest of foods.
I will praise you with songs of joy.

6 I lie awake thinking of you,
meditating on you through the night.
7 I think how much you have helped me;
I sing for joy in the shadow of your protecting wings.
8 I follow close behind you;
your strong right hand holds me securely.

Have you ever experienced that kind of longing for God. I can relate to lying awake in the middle of the night thinking of God, and praying to Him while everyone else in the house is asleep.

And what about the emotion David has as he writes? He not only sounds desperate for God, he also expresses grief over sin or over the absence of God's presence. Then to the other extreme at times he exhibits intense joy in the Lord. And he calls others to the same joy, as if it's suppose to be a normal thing for every believer. What'd ya know about that! David was not afraid to express his emotions as he worshipped God, as many today seem to be. David was unashamed of his passionate hunger for God, of the intense joy he felt in God's presence, and of the tears he shed over sin or over the absence of God. David loved God, with his will and with his emotions. Love requires both; what you do and how you feel expresses love. If in your marriage you show love by what you do, but show no affection your spouse will sense a coldness. If you show affection, but do not do the things that would show your spouse your love, your spouse will not believe you. David obeyed God *and* expressed an intense emotional affection for God. Does your experience with God match David's? If not are you bothered by that?

It is possible to put good things above Jesus without realizing it. We could put Bible study above the Lord. We could put ministry above the Lord. We could our religious practices before the Lord. Jesus is not a doctrine, a theology, a ministry, a church, a denomination, or an activity. Jesus is a person, a real person and we must put Him above all of those good things I mentioned. None of those good things died for us...Jesus did. None of those good things controls our destiny... Jesus does. None of those things bring us into a intimate relationship with God...Jesus does. And none of these things will give us power and authority ...Jesus does.

Why was David more successful and more powerful than King Saul? 1 Sam 18:14 (NLT) tells us his secret, "David continued to succeed in everything he did, *for the LORD was with him.*" In another place we read how Saul turned from God and the Spirit of God left him. David had power, because the Lord was with him and the Lord was with Him because David sought hard after God. That was the difference between David and Saul.

Passionate love for God is the key to power. Being with Jesus and having passion for Him is the key to power. If the church today lacks the power and authority of God it is because the church is not hungry for it by having an intense passion for God. Passionate love for God is the key to power.

The apostles had miraculous power. What was their secret? We find the answer to that question in their call Mark 3:13-16 (NKJV) - And He (Jesus) went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons...

According to these verses Jesus gave the Apostles authority and power to do three things: (1) preach, (2) heal sicknesses, and (3) cast out demons. But what came first, before they could attempt to minister for Jesus in preaching, healing, and casting out demons? Look again at verse 14. "*Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him...*" It was out of this intimate experience of being with Jesus, that He gave them power.

Let's look at another scripture: Acts 4:13-14 (NLT) In this scripture Peter and John were questioned by a council of religious leaders. They wanted to know by what power were they able to heal a crippled man. They boldly answered the question. Then, it says, "The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men who had had no special training. They also recognized them as *men who had been with Jesus.*"

Being with Jesus always produces a passion for Jesus and passion for Jesus always produces power.

Do you want greater anointing in God? "You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD (Jer. 29:13-14a NIV).

When Elijah asked Elisha what can I do for you, Elisha's response was "...Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit".... - 2 Kings 2:9 (NIV)

The First requirement to move in greater power/authority in God is to hunger for it. This is the starting place. Pray for a new hunger for God. Remember the prayer of Jesus in John 17:26(NLT)? "Father...I have revealed you ... and will keep on revealing you. I will do this so that your love for me may be in them and I in them."

Pray that the Holy Spirit will grant you the same love for Jesus as the Father has for the Son.

Pray for new hunger for God.