

December 14, 2014

“MIGHTY GOD”

1 Samuel 2:1-10 Revelation 4:1-11 John 14:18-20

In Isaiah 9:6, the prophet proclaims, *“To us a child is born, to us a son is given... and his name shall be called (among other things) Mighty God!”*

Mighty God! Power. *“Power belongs to God.”* In the 62nd Psalm, we read *“Once God has spoken, twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God!”* (v. 11) In Psalm 145, we read, *“Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable... All Thy works shall give thanks to Thee, O Lord, all Thy saints shall bless Thee! They shall speak of the glory of Thy Kingdom, and tell of Thy power!”* (v. 3, 10-11)

Hannah speaks of the power of God as she gives her son to Samuel, into the service of the faith: *“My heart exults in the Lord...”* (1 Samuel 2:1) Mary expressed very similar feelings at the realization of the power of God at work in her: *“My soul magnifies the Lord.”* (Luke 1:46) Mary felt the incredible and perhaps overwhelming outpouring of God’s good news as she realized a miracle was happening within her. She glorified God as God gave His Son to her. Hannah spoke in exultation as she gave her son to God: *“My strength is exalted in the Lord... There is none holy like the Lord! There is none besides Thee! There is no rock like our God!”* (1 Samuel 2:1-2)

And John had a vision of God’s heavenly court, where God is seated upon His throne surrounded by heavenly worshipers offering constant praise, singing: *“Worthy art Thou, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power...”* (Revelation 4:11) And later on, the vision includes the proclamation that *“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”* And those same perfect worshipers thank the Lord God almighty that He has taken His great power and begun to reign! (Revelation 11:15-17)

Power belongs to God. And God’s greatest expression of power is known in Jesus Christ who said, *“I will not leave you desolate...”* (John 14:18), who said, *“If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed...nothing shall be impossible to you.”* (Matthew 17:20) Jesus does not leave us desolate. He has planted the seed of faith. And if the Kingdom of God, the *reign of God’s power*, is like a grain of mustard seed, which, though very, very small, becomes a great tree, then there is among us, by the virtue of faith, a potential so vast it is truly incomprehensible, or, as the Psalmist has said, *unsearchable*. Perhaps it is something that even works, at times, invisibly, unknown and unfelt, unnoticed, like the growth of a tree...

Truly, God’s Kingdom encompasses all of creation: A universe so vast it is, to us, unsearchable. But, like the very small seed, it must grow. It is magnified through us, through those who believe in and follow God’s Son. It may begin with something very, very small and simple, but it does not stay the same. It is like something we could hold in our hands, like a gift that brings so much wonder through what it means that it causes the heart to swell and the soul to magnify its joy.

Power belongs to God. *“All Thy works shall give thanks to Thee...They shall speak of the glory of Thy Kingdom and tell of Thy power.”* Our experience of power can strike us with awe. In the lifetime of a blue-white super giant star, the power of gravitation at its core can increase to the point where it goes supernova. Now, we tend to think of such a phenomenon as an explosion, but it is not. Because the gravity at the core becomes so great it implodes in upon itself and an effect like an explosion is experienced as the exterior of the star rebounds outward. The way it may look is like the explosion of fireworks, all sorts of little sparkling stars burning away from a center-point. But there remains a core of neutrons bound together by nuclear forces as a singular, massive atomic nucleus with an atomic weight so great that, as it spins, its gravitational pull draws everything...**everything** nearby into it. All energy and matter is collapsing into its pull. Nothing, not even light, can get out. From a distance, however, this phenomenon might look incredibly bright, but that is only because that light is being bent into the powerful gravitational field. At the very center, however, there is a blackness. It’s called *a black hole* because the gravitational power pulls the light back to it at its core. It is not a hole, though, it is a mass of

gravitational force. But, as a gravitational mass, it is invisible. And like the Kingdom of God, like the seed, a black hole is the power of unseen potential. The black hole in the constellation of Cygnus, the Swan, was discovered by the first x-ray observatory in space in 1971. Curiously, a black hole, as extraordinarily powerful as it is, can be as small as something we can hold in our hands, like a gift, like a seed.

And though the seed expands outwardly, from itself, the black hole draws inwardly upon itself. Both are incredibly small, but both are incredibly powerful. Both are no bigger than a gift we could hold in our hands, but so was God's gift of His Son, the Baby in the manger, possessing unknown potential and unseen light!

Such is the paradox of faith, which in Hannah's estimation, and in Mary's Magnificat, sees strength in weakness and the mighty made powerless as the power of God is revealed. Even Paul has said, God's power is "*made perfect in weakness.*" (2 Corinthians 12:9) And Hannah says, "*Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge and by His actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble gird on strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has born seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. The Lord kills and brings to life; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; He brings low, and He exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; He lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor.*" (1 Samuel 2:3-7)

In the Revelation, it is God, and God alone, who is worthy *to receive glory and honor and power.* Those in their seat of heavenly honor say so. The twenty-four Elders, symbolic of the twelve patriarchs of God and the twelve disciples of Christ, they even cast their golden crowns before God's throne in worship. You see it is not power that is worshiped, it is God, and power belongs to God. And Hannah proclaimed that "*The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; He will give strength to His king and exalt the power of His anointed.*" (1 Samuel 2:10) And Isaiah proclaimed that "*to us a child is born, to us a Son is given....and He shall be called 'Mighty God.'*" (Isaiah 9:6) And God's Son is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the anointed. The word *Christ* means exactly that: *anointed.* And Jesus has said, "*I will not leave you desolate, I will come to you... Because I live, you will live also. In that Day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.*" (John 14:18-20) The power cannot be seen, but it draws us like a gravitational force. Just consider how many people seem to come to Christ at the celebration of His First Coming! The power cannot be contained, for it must grow like a seed. Just consider how the hearts of people are magnified by love and generosity at the celebration of God's incarnation! The power belongs to God, but it works through God's people. It is a gift we can hold in our hands, but it's a gift we must share in order to truly experience it!

What a mighty God we serve!