

The Power of God

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A few weeks ago, the weather report was such that here in north central Washington, we were to experience an electrical storm. In the Moses Lake area, the storm would begin in the early morning. That evening, prior to retiring, I looked out west and, sure enough, one could see storm clouds gathering in the distance, so much so and in such intensity, that I commented to Shelly that she should take a look. She looked and made a comment as to the cloud formation and with that, we retired for the night. Sometime around 3 a.m., we woke from our sleep by the magnitude of thunder in the Moses Lake area. We both began to stare out our bedroom window and what we saw was the most beautiful light show and rumbling of thunder across the night sky. The show continued for nearly an hour, and there were times that the lightening was so frequent and intense, that the darkness of the night seemed to fade into the background. The noise was so loud that it reminded me of a story of a mother hoping to calm her three-year old child during a thunder storm. The mother calmly said to her son, "Don't worry honey, it's just God in heaven, He's bowling." At any rate, the thunder and lightning made me think of the power of God, not that He caused the storm, although He is sovereign and He may have, but that He allowed the storm and the intensity of the storm.

The power of God is something to think about, and in thinking about God's power, we need to think about how it impacts our lives from a physical perspective as well as a spiritual one. The title of today's sermon, simply stated is

The Power of God

Have you ever thought of this? Once a person reaches a certain age, physical capacities begin to decline. Some of you may be asking already, what's this got to do with the power of God? Well, just stay with me and I promise as we go through this, you'll see the correlation. Once a person reaches a certain age, physical capacities begin to decline. With some parts of the human body, that decline begins pretty early in life.

Under the health tab at www.dailymail.com, an article titled "Old Before Your Time, When Your Body Starts Going Downhill" states the following regarding specific body parts.

We'll begin with the brain.

As we get older, the number of nerve cells or neurons in the brain decreases. We start with around a hundred billion, but in our early twenties, that number starts to decline. By forty, we could lose as many as ten thousand of these neurons per day, affecting our memory, or coordination and our brain function.

No wonder that those of us who have reached a certain age, and I'm not going to give ages or dates, have senior moments. We just don't have the capacity that we had before.

How about the gut?

The healthy gut has a good balance of harmful and friendly bacteria, but levels of friendly bacteria in the gut drop very early in life, significantly after fifty-five years of age, particularly in the large intestine. As a result, we suffer from poor digestion and an increased risk of gut disease.

How about breasts? All of a sudden everybody's listening. Now ladies, don't get upset with me. I'm just reading what the article states.

By their mid-thirties, women's breasts start losing tissue and fat, reducing size and fullness. Sagging starts at age forty and can shrink considerably. By the way, just to include the men, the muscle mass in men's chests become affected around age forty. Men too begin to lose firmness.

How about the bladder?

Loss of bladder control can begin at any age, but is more likely to hit when one reaches retirement age, around age sixty-five. The bladder starts to contract suddenly even when it's not full.

This one really surprised me. The lungs.

Lung capacity slowly starts to decrease from the age of twenty. By the age of forty, some people are already experiencing breathlessness. This is partly due because the muscles of the rib cage, which control breathing, stiffen up.

How about our voice?

The voice starts to age before the age of sixty-five. Our voices become quieter and hoarser with age. The soft tissue of the voice box, the larynx, weakens, affecting the pitch, loudness and quality of the voice. A woman's voice may become huskier and lower in pitch, where a man's voice may become thinner and higher.

How about the eyes?

Glasses are the norm for nearly everyone of forty years of age. As failing eyesight kicks in, usually long sightedness, affects our ability to see objects up close.

On my fortieth birthday, not before or after, I went from wearing no glasses right into bifocals. I'm now into trifocals.

The heart, and this was surprising as well.

The heart starts aging at forty. The heart pumps blood less effectively around the body as we get older. This is because blood vessels become less elastic and arteries can harden and become blocked because of fatty deposits forming on the coronary arteries, caused by eating too much saturated fat. Men over age forty-five and women over fifty-five are at greater risk of heart attack.

Our kidneys.

Our kidneys start aging at age fifty. With kidneys, the number of filtering units, nephrons, that remove waste from the bloodstream, start to reduce in middle age. The kidneys of a seventy-five-year-old person will filter only half of the amount of blood than a kidney of a thirty-year old does.

The prostate. Now men, don't get upset with me. I'm just reading what the article says.

By age forty, the prostate often becomes enlarged, leading to problems such as increased need to urinate. This is known as benign prostatic hyperplasia and affects half of men over the age of fifty. Some studies indicate that when a man reaches seventy-five or whenever life ends, from what I've read, eighty percent have some form of prostate cancer.

Our bones; and this surprised me.

Our bones start aging at thirty-five. Throughout our lives, old bone is broken down by cells called osteoclasts and replaced by bone-building cells called osteoblasts, a process called bone turnover. Children's bone growth is rapid. The skeleton takes just two years to renew itself completely, two years to renew the skeletal structure completely. In adults, it may take ten years. Until our mid-twenties, our bone density is still increasing, but at age thirty-five, bone loss begins as part of the natural aging process. We lose two inches in height by the time we are eighty, due to simple loss of bone density. So, it's true, we are all getting shorter.

Our teeth.

Our teeth begin to age starting around forty. As we age, we produce less saliva which washes away bacteria so teeth and gums are more vulnerable to decay. Receding gums, when tissue is lost from around the teeth, is very common in nearly all adults at the age of forty or older.

Muscles.

Muscles start aging at thirty. Muscle is constantly being built up and broken down, a process which is balanced in young adults. However, by the time we are thirty, breakdown is greater than buildup. Once adults reach forty, they start to lose between half to two percent of their muscle each year. Regular exercise can help reduce this, but we're all growing older and we are all losing muscle mass.

Our hearing.

Hearing starts aging at the mid-fifties. More than half the people over sixty lose hearing simply because of age.

Our skin.

Skin starts aging in mid-twenties.

Our taste and smell.

This starts aging at sixty.

Fertility.

Fertility starts aging at thirty-five.

Hair.

Hair starts aging at thirty, if you have any to age.

The bottom line is this, and here's the tie, the correlation to all the information that was just presented. Physically, each of us are declining and there's absolutely no way to get around it. It comes with aging, but with this comes the good news. Spiritually, each of us are inclining, if you will, rising, spiritually maturing. Why the spiritual maturity? The power of God.

Ephesians 1:15. *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,*

16) Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17) That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18) The eyes of your understanding being enlightened ... (KJV)

Our eyes may be failing or declining due to age, but through the power of God, the eyes of our understanding are maturing and enlightened.

18b) ... that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,
19) And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe [spiritual maturation], according to the working of his mighty power,
20) Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,
21) Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:
22) And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,
23) Which is his body, the fulness of him that fills all in all. (KJV)

Think of it this way. God has an investment in each of us, an investment to the point that He tells us to try Him, to prove Him. Malachi 3:8 from the New Living Translation:

Malachi 3:8. "Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me! "But you ask, 'What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?' "You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me.
9) You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me.
10) Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!
11) Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies.
12) "Then all nations will call you blessed, for your land will be such a delight," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. (NLT)

God has an investment in each of us. God has such an investment in us that He is asking us to prove Him; in today's vernacular, to take Him on. He says, "Prove me and I'll show you my power." God definitely has an investment in each of us.

Speaking of investments, have you ever made an investment and that particular investment went south, or like me, wished you had made an investment and you just didn't think the timing was right? Let me site a personal example. Back in the early 1980s, I was employed by the Memorex Corporation out of San Jose, California. I represented their magnetic media products to major corporations here in the Pacific Northwest as well as smaller less-known businesses, even some start-up companies. Well, there was this very small start-up in Kirkland, Washington, a small suburb of Seattle on the shores of Lake Washington, east of Seattle. It was a small company of about thirty to fifty employees. This was a small start-up, a privately held company. It was housed in a three-story building in which they occupied only a couple floors. I had been presenting Memorex to this company for quite some time. As they were going public, I had the opportunity, like thousands of others, to invest in their stock, an

opportunity I did not take. You see, the timing for me was just not right, even though the IPO was only \$21.00 per share. It just wasn't right for me.

But understand this, the investment that God initiated in us, the timing for Him and the timing for each of us was right. Over the years, through His investment in each of us and our desire to participate in His investment, His power can be seen in each and every one of us, and it is to His glory and His honor.

By the way, I didn't mention that two of those young guys in that start-up company were Bill Gates and Paul Allen. The company, of course, is Microsoft. Since its initial offering of March 13, 1986, Microsoft stock has split nine times. Today there are 7,727,529,820 common shares outstanding. Why are Bill Gates, Paul Allen and many others billionaires today? You do the math. If I had invested in a hundred shares on March 13, 1986, and if I would have sold those shares on December 1, 1999 when Microsoft reached its peak of worth, my initial investment of \$2,100 would have sold for 1.4 million in only thirteen years. Yeah.

So, what's the meaning here? What are we getting at? Simply this, for me, I did not recognize the potential of Microsoft. For each of us, we may not have recognized the power of God and the potential for growth at the time of investment in us, but each of us are now on the receiving end of His power, the spiritual maturity spoken of a few moments ago.

1 Corinthians 6:12. *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*

13) Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them ... (NKJV)

The physical body is not meant to live forever. We just went through that. It breaks down. We decline physically.

13b) ... Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

14) And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. (NKJV)

Spiritual maturation is the process which leads to the final raising up, the resurrection, all through the power of God.

15) Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not!

16) Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh."

17) But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. (NKJV)

Again, this is accomplished through the indwelling of the holy spirit, a spirit of power, a spirit of love and a spirit of a discerning mind.

18) *Flee sexual immorality [we need to use that discerning mind]. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.*

19) *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?*

20) *For you were bought at a price ... (NKJV)*

As mentioned moments ago, God has made an investment in each and every one of us.

20b) *... therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (NKJV)*

The power of God is manifested in many ways other than just His investment in each of us, for His power can be seen in many other ways.

Jeremiah 51:15. *He has made the earth by His power; He has established the world by His wisdom, and stretched out the heaven by His understanding.*

16) *When He utters His voice—There is a multitude of waters in the heavens: "He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He makes lightnings for the rain; He brings the wind out of His treasures." (NKJV)*

Shelly and I experienced His creative powers firsthand when we were absolutely mesmerized by the thunder and lightning storm that was spoken of in the introduction.

15) *He has made the earth by His power; He has established the world by His wisdom, and stretched out the heaven by His understanding. (NKJV)*

1 Corinthians 8:6. *Yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live. (NKJV)*

All things are created by the Father through the Son. The power of God is made known in His creation. God's power is shown in His dealing with nations.

For Psalms 66, The New American Standard Version gives the heading of "Praise for God's mighty deeds and for His answer to prayer".

Psalms 66:1. *Make a joyful shout to God, all the earth!*

2) *Sing out the honor of His name; Make His praise glorious.*

3) *Say to God, "How awesome are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power Your enemies shall submit themselves to You.*

4) *All the earth shall worship You and sing praises to You; they shall sing praises to Your name."*

5) *Come and see the works of God; He is awesome in His doing toward the sons of men.*

6) *He turned the sea into dry land; they went through the river on foot. There we will rejoice in Him.*

7) *He rules by His power forever; ...*

...

9) *Who keeps our soul among the living, and does not allow our feet to be moved.*

10) *For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined.*

11) *You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs.*

12) *You have caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water ... (NKJV)*

We must come to understand that the power of God is also sovereign.

12b) ... but You brought us out to rich fulfillment. (NKJV)

The power of God delivers each and every one of us. We are sanctified by the power of God. Sanctification simply means to *be set apart*.

Philippians 2:12. *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;*

13) for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. (NKJV)

We are set apart, sanctified, by the power of God to will and to do His pleasure, not our own, but the will of God.

Keep this thought and turn to 1 Corinthians 6.

1 Corinthians 6:9. *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,*

10) nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

11) And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (NKJV)

We are all sanctified in the name of Christ by the spirit of God. What is that spirit?

This is a letter from Paul to Timothy, so by extension, it's a letter to us.

2 Timothy 1:5. *I remember your genuine faith, for you share the faith that first filled your grandmother Lois and your mother, Eunice ... (NLT)*

The antennas on the ladies should come up. Ladies, do you see the role that Timothy's mother and grandmother played in his life? Here's an example not for mothers and grandmothers only, but for all women, as the power of God can work through those willing to sacrifice, to partake in God's investment.

6) This is why I remind you to fan into flames the spiritual gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you.

7) For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power [emphasis on the word "power"], love, and self-discipline. (NLT)

Once baptized and having hands laid on us, we receive God's spirit and God's spirit is a spirit of power. It's by or through that power that we are set aside. It's by or through that power that we are sanctified for God's will, for His use, for His purpose.

Another point on the power of God is in the resurrection itself. We touched base a little bit on it a moment ago.

2 Corinthians 13:1. *This will be the third time I am coming to you. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."*

2) I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare—

3) since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.

4) For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives ... (NKJV)

Christ was resurrected. He sits today at the right hand of His Father.

4b) ... yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him [we, too, are in the flesh], but we shall live with Him ... (NKJV)

That living, in a sense, takes place today, but in fullness takes place at the resurrection, and hopefully the first resurrection.

4 continued) ... by the power of God toward you. (NKJV)

The power of God is a key in the resurrection, if not THE key of the resurrection.

Here we find the Sadducees challenging Christ as to the resurrection.

Matthew 22:23. *The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him,*

24) saying: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.

25) Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother.
26) Likewise, the second also, and the third, even to the seventh.
27) Last of all the woman died also.
28) Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.”
29) Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.
30) For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.
31) But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying,
32) ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”
33) And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.
(NKJV)

Here we find that Christ tells the Sadducees that they have no clue as to the power of God. In verse 32, He (Christ) reaffirms that His Father is not the God of the dead but there is a plan of salvation for each and every individual and the fulfillment of that plan is through the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 6:14. *And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. (NKJV)*

I like the way the New Living Translation puts this verse.

1 Corinthians 6:14. *And God will raise us from the dead by his power, just as he raised our Lord from the dead. (NLT)*

The resurrection is a miracle and that miracle is produced by the power of God. Miracles show the power of God for sure. There are both Old Testament and New Testament examples. In the Old Testament, we have the miracles of Elohim in the creation itself in Genesis 1, or better stated, the recreation of the earth, and all of the life-support mechanisms being put into place by creation for man and woman. In the Old Testament, we find God directly involved in the miracle of Sarah’s pregnancy and Isaac’s birth. The one example I want to turn to showing the power of God as manifested (shown) in a miracle can be found in Exodus 3. You’re all probably familiar with this particular miracle.

Exodus 3:1. *Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.*

2) *And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So, he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.*

3) Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."

4) So, when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!"
And he said, "Here I am."

5) Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."

6) Moreover, He said, "I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

7) And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.

...

10) Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." (NKJV)

Now note who Moses replies to.

11) But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

12) So, He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." (NKJV)

The point that I'm making here is the fact of the power of God and the miracle to keep the bush burning and not consuming the bush. Who knows how long this dialogue, this conversation took place, yet the bush was not consumed.

The New Testament also refers to the power of God in miracles. This reference is made directly by Jesus Christ Himself. The power of God can be seen in the New Testament miracles.

The topic here is that of a house divided cannot stand.

Luke 11:14. And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled.

15) But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

16) Others, testing Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven.

17) But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falls.

18) If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub.

19) And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore, they will be your judges.

20) *But if I [Christ] cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. (NKJV)*

The Greek word for “finger” means just that, a finger. The NLT reads, *power of God*, but the meaning here is that of the finger of God, showing God’s intimate, personal involvement in this particular miracle by His power.

There are numerous examples of God’s power being manifested in miracles throughout the New Testament, and I would encourage each of you to study them.

Christ alone performed 37 miracles, at least 37 that are documented for our reading. There may be more and most likely were more for we read in John 21:25,

John 21:25. *And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen. (NKJV)*

So, again we have 37 miracles by Christ Himself and one can be assured that there were certainly more based by what we read in John 21:25.

There are twelve appearances of Christ after His resurrection, all through the power of God. The power of God was involved in six listed miracles by Peter. The power of God was involved in nine listed miracles of Paul. There are fourteen other miracles in the New Testament, all of which were performed through the power of God.

As we begin to conclude this message, what should we do with all the information regarding the power of God? What does it mean to each of us? We can find three admonitions for us regarding the power of God.

1. We are to sing of God’s power.

A lot of information was brought forth today thus far in this sermon regarding the power of God, but what does it mean to us?

Psalm 59:16. *But I will sing of Your power; yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning; for You have been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble.
17) To You, O my Strength, I will sing praises; for God is my defense, my God of mercy. (NKJV)*

2. We are to render praise to the power of God.

Psalm 21:13. *Be exalted, O LORD, in Your own strength! We will sing [we just referenced this in Psalm 59] and praise Your power. (NKJV)*

3. We are to talk (converse) amongst ourselves and possibly to others about the power of God.

This sermon is talking about the power of God. This is a Psalm of God's majesty, a Psalm of David. Within it is the power of God laced throughout.

***Psalm 145:1.** I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever.*

2) Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever.

3) Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.

4) One generation shall praise Your works to another, and shall declare Your mighty acts.

5) I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, and on Your wondrous works. (NKJV)

Again, mention of God's powerful works.

6) Men shall speak of the might [power] of Your awesome acts, and I will declare Your greatness.

7) They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness.

8) The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. (NKJV)

Well, we find here the power of God in His restraint, and the power of God through His love.

9) The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.

10) All Your works shall praise You, O LORD, and Your saints shall bless You.

11) They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power,

12) To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom.

13) Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations.

14) The LORD upholds all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down. (NKJV)

Again, they're raised up through the power of God.

15) The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season.

16) You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. (NKJV)

This is all through the power of God.

17) The LORD is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works.

*18) The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.
19) He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them. (NKJV)*

Again, all through His greatness and power.

*20) The LORD preserves all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy.
21) My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and all flesh shall bless His holy name forever and ever. (NKJV)*

David, through this Psalm, speaks of the power of God and praises Him. We as Christians, as those who profess to follow Jesus Christ, should do the same. Talk about the power of God.

We started this message referencing an electrical storm and the power that Shelly and I saw in that early morning. But there's more to the story than just the bright flashes of light and the sound of thunder. Lightning has a purpose of more than just causing forest fires and electrical outages.

You see, a couple of weeks ago, Sabbath services were held in the home of brethren who live just outside of Cheney, Washington, approximately an hour from Moses Lake. Shelly and I had arranged to have Dale and Laura Roecks ride with us and we were to stop in Odessa to pick up one other person. Between Mosses Lake, Odessa and Cheney, there are probably (I'm guessing) thousands and thousands of acres of dry land farming and most of it is wheat. This time of year, the winter wheat here in central Washington is around knee-high on the average man. We were all amazed at the dark green lushness of the wheat. The color reminded me of the deep green tropical forests of southeast Asia before Agent Orange, especially during the monsoon season. Maybe a better analogy would be the rolling hills of the Emerald Islands of Ireland. At any rate, the green was so deep, so dark that we all commented on it. It was so gorgeous to see hundreds if not thousands of acres of this greenery, and then here and there was this bright yellow of canola and the blue sky. It was absolutely pristine. We all commented that the wheat is so green this year. Then Dale, the knowledgeable farmer that he is, explained to us that one reason for this year's deep green coloring of the plant was the fact that it's a byproduct of lightning because lightning redistributes the nitrogen that is part of the oxygen that we breathe. Of course, nitrogen feeds plants. So, I researched this a little bit. At sea level, nitrogen makes up 78.084 percent of the oxygen we breathe. I knew there was nitrogen in the air we breathe. I had no idea that, at sea level, it was 78 percent. Lightning redistributes the nitrogen within the air, thus the plants receive extra doses of this compound each and every time that lightning occurs, and we have had several lightning storms in central Washington this year.

Just as God, through His power of creation, can feed plants to help maintain their health and vitality as they grow and mature for harvest, God through His power, feeds each of us through His word as we grow in the grace and knowledge striving for spiritual maturity.

Speaking of being fed and nourished, turn to John 17. Here we find the power of God in four simple words. As we were going through the demise of Worldwide a number of years ago, this was my favorite scripture and still is. This is from The New American Standard Bible, the updated version.

John 17:17. *Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. (NAS)*

Sanctify simply means *to set aside for a specific or special purpose*. Four small, very simple words to understand, *Your word is truth*.

The power of God is in His word, and that word is the Bible that we have before us. Truth is found in no other place, none.

With that in mind, turn to Hebrews 4.

Hebrews 4:12. *For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.*

13) Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable. (NLT)

For a final scripture, please turn to Jude 24 and 25.

Jude 24. *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling [through His power], and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,*

25) To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.