

"THE POWER TO BECOME"

INTRODUCTION

I suspect that all of us at one time or another have faced some trying times when circumstances have stood in the way of attainment. I don't think very many of us here this morning believe in the theological concept of predestination, and yet most of us have subtly accepted the idea because sometimes we end up saying, "Well...that's life for you.... what's to be is to be...not much we can do about it...no use struggling against circumstances". Such statements indicate a kind of subconscious acceptance of predestination.

Napoleon once roared, "Circumstances? What are circumstances? I make circumstances!" Or, as they sometimes say in sports, "Breaks? You make your own breaks!"

DEVELOPMENT

Now, if there's one thing that we can be sure of from a study of fundamental Truth as Jesus taught it, it is that when man claims his divine inheritance, he chooses his divinity and he chooses his destiny. He comes to believe that he is in no sense of the word, "A victim of circumstances", but is actually a dynamo of creative power - to be awakened, released, unfolded, bearing with him vast potentialities to either make or mar his life. As William Jennings Bryan once said,

"Destiny is not a matter of chance,
it is a matter of choice!"

"Choice" - not "chance". The point is, as William James, the psychologist put it, "Man habitually uses only a small part of the powers that he possesses".

In a world full of food, people starve. In a world filled with so much beauty and joy, people kill and destroy. In a world filled with enormous problems, people sit back passively and do nothing to help solve them. More than anything else, people need desperately, as we all need in various degrees, to have the realization put before them, "I believe in the power of the Living God. I believe in my own divine potential to become a conqueror".

Archimedes once said, "Give me a lever long enough and a fulcrum strong enough and single-handed, I can move this world".

Considering the miracle of the Mind, we find that man has the equipment that when rightly used will enable him to move the world, or at least to move the mountains that stand between him and his goals. Remember the insight of Jesus, "If ye have faith, ye can move mountains". So faith is the fulcrum strong enough, and the lever long enough is the creative, constructive and disciplined use of Mind - through prayer, trust, positive thinking and the dynamics of the spoken word.

WITHINAMAN

The First Chapter of John's Gospel - a chapter that we should read and re-read more often than we do - gives us a deep insight into the nature of God and into the tremendous possibilities instilled in man. Listen to the opening words,

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with
God, and the Word was God. All things were made through
Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.
In Him was life, and the life was the light of man".

John is saying here that infinite Mind created everything through Mind. And we have minds made after the divine image. And thus we also have this power of creation. Every thought creates and the spoken Word releases this creativity. Man is a child of God. Man is a spiritual being. And there is a totality of the divinity within him awaiting expression.

As Paul says, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God". This is simply an evidence of the free nature of man. Man is created by God to be a Son of God. But - there is a process of becoming that is involved. Until we really believe in our divine creation and come to accept this Truth, and receive the constant "infilling" of this activity of God, and let ourselves become channels through which God expresses, until we take this step in consciousness, we are still mortal, fleshy persons highly susceptible to such ideas as the temptations and wages of sin.

John, in this same chapter, goes on to add:

"The same light lighteth every man
which cometh into the world".

The light within a person is always there. No matter how low a man seems to sink, no matter what his problems may be, no matter how far he may drift on the sea of life, that light is there. And any brilliance that man achieves he does so through the light within and not through the human ego or the sense nature of our personhood.

WE HAVE SUCH GREAT POTENTIAL

What a tremendous thing it is to know that we have this fantastic potential of the Spirit within us - through which "we can do all things" - as Paul declared - and without which we can do little or nothing. We can change! We can change life around us. "All things are possible" "With faith, mountains can be moved". Hearts melted. Lives changed.

I came across a story this past week that I would share with you for it seems to tie in with this. It's about a man by the name of Manuelo - a man from the Philippines who came from a very small community set back in the hills to visit America. Everything was new and wonderful to him...he was just overwhelmed by all he saw here - elevators, telephones, television sets, tractors, fire engines, electric lights, space vehicles. When the time came for Manuelo to return home, he wanted to carry something from America to show his hillside neighbors...to let them know of the wonders of this great land. Most things were too big, but there was one thing that was small and not too expensive and very wonderful. Before he left, he went to the hardware store and bought a paper bag full of lightbulbs, sockets for the bulbs with some little buttons to turn the lights on and off and the wires for hanging them.

Home again with his friends in the primitive hillside village, Manuelo was bursting with his happy secret. He busily prepared his surprise. He went through all the rooms - hanging bulbs, sockets and wires. When they wanted to know what it was all about he quietly said, "Wait 'till dark...then you'll see."

When the sun set, he went around pressing each button. When nothing happened, he was puzzled, disappointed, dejected. Poor Manuelo. No one had bothered to tell him about electricity. He did not know that light bulbs were nothing but useless glass and wire unless they were connected with the lines through which power traveled from the power plant.

POWER John adds this very important word in that same chapter, "To them gave He power to become..." There it is - the "key" to life. The power is within - this power to transcend all human situations. There are no limits to what that power can do in a life. This power is a "spirit" thing - not a human thing, not an ego thing. It is a dynamic dimension of the Spirit of the Living God within. As the Lord's Prayer puts it, "For thine is the kingdom, the power, the glory - forever".

The power to overcome - to attain, to achieve - the power is there. Trust it. Lean on it. Let it pulsate through your being. And remember that no matter where you are...what you may be...no matter what you have lost.. or how little you've gained...no matter how far you may think yourself to be from those heights you have set for yourself, or feel that God has set for you. - THE POWER TO BECOME...this is your divine inheritance.

Take it. Build on it. Remembering at all times that with the LEVER of the positive and constructive use of the Word, and with the FULCRUM of faith, we can move mountains...and assert our God-given power to become.

PRAYER Grant, Lord, that what we have heard with our ears, we may believe in our hearts, and that what we believe in our hearts, we may practice in our lives.

Shed forth thy spirit upon us. Make us instruments in thy hands for good. Make us brave, humble, loving and believing people...ready for an adventure with Christ. We do not ask that thou wilt keep us safe, but that thou will keep us loyal. Deepen us in our discipleship.

May the bread and wine open our eyes, O God, to the spirit of Christ at work here this hour. Bind us more closely to each other and to Him and lift up our hearts and minds to thee, that we may go out renewed in body, and soul, fed, nourished and made new to meet the tasks of another week in this city. In the name of Jesus, we pray.